ANCIENT INDIAN TRADITION & MYTHOLOGY

TRANSLATED BY

A BOARD OF SCHOLARS

AND EDITED BY

Dr. G.P. BHATT

VOLUME 46

ANCIENT INDIAN TRADITION AND MYTHOLOGY SERIES

[PURĀṆAS IN TRANSLATION]

VOLUMES

ŚIVA 1-4

LIṄGA 5-6

BHĀGAVATA 7-11

GARUḌA 12-14

NĀRADA 15-19

KŪRMA 20-21

BRAHMĀṆḌA 22-26

AGNI 27-30

VARĀHA 31-32

BRAHMA 33-36

VĀYU 37-38

PADMA, PARTS I-VIII 39-46

VOLUMES UNDER PREPARATION

BHAVIṢYA

BRAHMAVAIVARTA

DEVĪBHĀGAVATA

KĀLIKĀ

MĀRKAṆḌEYA

MATSYA

PADMA, PARTS IX-X

SKANDA

VĀMANA

VIṢṆU

VIṢṆUDHARMOTTARA

THE

PADMA-PURĀṆA

PART VIII

TRANSLATED AND ANNOTATED BY

Dr. N.A. DESHPANDE

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS
PVT. LTD. • DELHI

First Edition: Delhi, 1991

ISBN: 81-208-0807-x

Also available at:
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS
41 U.A., Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 001
120 Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Madras 600 004
16 St. Mark's Road, Bangalore 560 001
Ashok Rajpath, Patna 800 004
Chowk, Varanasi 221 001

UNESCO COLLECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS— Indian Series
This book has been accepted in the Indian Translation Series of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works, jointly sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Government of India.

PRINTED IN INDIA
BY JAINENDRA PRAKASH JAIN AT SHRI JAINENDRA PRESS, A-45 NARAINA INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE I, NEW DELHI 110 028 AND PUBLISHED BY NARENDRA PRAKASH JAIN FOR MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS PVT. LTD., BUNGALOW ROAD, JAWAHAR NAGAR, DELHI 110 007.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The purest gems lie hidden in the bottom of the ocean or in the depth of rocks. One has to dive into the ocean or delve into the rocks to find them out. Similarly, truth lies concealed in the language which with the passage of time has become obsolete. Man has to learn that language before he discovers that truth.

But he has neither the means nor the leisure to embark on that course. We have, therefore, planned to help him acquire knowledge by an easier course. We have started the series of Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology in English Translation. Our goal is to universalize knowledge through the most popular international medium of expression. The publication of the Purāṇas in English Translation is a step towards that goal.

Acknowledgements

It is our pleasant duty to put on record our sincere thanks to Dr. R.N. Dandekar and the UNESCO authorities for their kind encouragement and valuable help in the publication of the volumes in this series.

EDITORIAL

We are happy to add one more to the already published forty-five volumes of the AITM series. The present one, being the eighth part of the Padma Purāṇa in English translation, comprises chapters 82-184 of the sixth, Uttarakhaṇḍa, Section which is big enough to occupy the next part and part of the tenth and last one.

As an analysis of the contents reveals, out of the 103 chapters of the Uttarakhaṇḍa included here as many as 42 deal with the Holy Places of the Jambū Dvīpa, highlighting their efficacy, with the help of illustrative stories, in the riddance of both major and minor sins, not only of a person who actually visits them with faith and takes a holy bath there but also of his forefathers of a varying number of previous generations. The reader will notice that each and every such place is praised as if it were the holiest of holy places—a tendency akin to what Max Müller has termed 'henotheism' in the case of the Vedic gods.

Next comes the devotion to god Viṣṇu, to which about 30 chapters are devoted narrating the various celebrations, festivals, rites, vows and modes of worship to be performed to propitiate the god. Devotion to Viṣṇu is said to be of three kinds, viz. Sāttvika, Rājasa and Tāmasa. In Sāttvikī Bhakti, which is the best of the three, the devotee merges his heart in Him, dedicates himself to Him, practices compassion and is always intent upon duties sacred to Viṣṇu; he worships the Lord three times a day and subsists on fruits, roots and water, and imprints his body with marks of a conch and a disc. Ths second type, i.e. Rājasī Bhakti, is the one motivated by a desire to get objects of sensuous enjoyment, glory and affluence. The Tāmasī Bhakti which is the most inferior of the three types, is characterized by egoism, hypocrisy, deceit and destructiveness. In the practice of meditation and devotion the deity with a form is preferred to a formless one, and this may be treated as an argument in favour of idol-worship. The Purāṇa argues: "How can a man go along a

vacant path without a support?...The one (Lord) having a form is easily seen. The formless one is not seen. There is pleasure of service of the one having a form; no (such) pleasure in the case of serving a formless one" (ch. 132).

One of these chapters (ch. 90) contains the story of a demon Śaṅkha who, attributing the invincible power of gods to their possession of the Vedic hymns, snatches the Vedas from Satyaloka when Viṣṇu was asleep, how he was killed by the Lord assuming the form of a big fish and then how the Vedas were recovered from waters by the sages at the behest of the Lord. Several things are indicated by this mythical account, viz. mainly that though Brahmā, the god residing in the highest Satyaloka is the custodian of the Vedas, the real keeper of a vigil and the protector of them is Lord Viṣṇu; and that the sages who recovered the different portions of the Veda from water are the seers of their respective portions, not their authors. This account most probably points to the historical fact that the Vedas were at some time not known to recorded history thrown by some foreign invaders from across the seas into the sea and were later recovered and restored to their original shape by some brāhmaṇa sages. It may as well be surmised that in some remote antiquity a master copy of the Vedas was kept in the custody of a super-priest of Brahmā category, and was stolen by some heretics, but was fortunately recovered in time, and then started the practice of committing the Vedas to memory and passing them on through oral tradition only for security reasons.

Incidentally, chapter 88 of this part reiterates that Lord Kṛṣṇa had sixteen thousand wives, and recommends the gift of Tulāpuruṣa (articles equal to the weight of a person) for obtaining a husband like Kṛṣṇa from birth to birth.

The last ten chapters of this part praise the first ten chapters of the Gītā and show how a recitation of each wholly or partly, intentionally or accidentally elevates a wretch to the highest spiritual position. While praising chapter sixth for its efficacy the famous Chāndogya story of king Jānaśruti and sage Raikva is reproduced with a slight variation in these names making them Jñānaśruti and Raikya respectively.

Next comes the story of Jalandhara which has already been narrated in detail in chapters 3-18 of this Khaṇḍa (vide Pd. P.,

Part VII). Here it, very strangely, reappears in nine chapters, viz. 96-104 without any new feature at all. We have already hinted at the multiple authorship of this Purāṇa in our Preface to Part VII and may only add here that it was a sensless act on the part of the author of this repetition.

Lastly, one long chapter (122) is devoted to the details of Dīpāvalī celebration, which gives a sort of religious sanction to the practice of gambling during the festival. It is said that Pārvatī defeated Śiva in the game of dice and sent him away naked, and further that he who gets victory first (in gambling) passes the whole year happily.

Some more observations of the Purāṇa may be noted here:

In chapter 112 it has been stated that religious merit or sin of one person can pass to another person through contact, e.g. due to being paired together, going together, eating from the same pot etc., followed by a long list of what fraction of it passes under what circumstances. The arithmatic involved here, if not arbitrary, would pose a serious juridical problem for one wishing to find a rational basis for the calculation.

The Purāṇa has introduced two technical terms in chapter 114, viz. *śuṣka* for non-deliberate sin and *ārdra* for a deliberate one, and two more in chapter 132, viz. *śukla dravya* for money earned through performance of one's duty, which is equivalent to the current term 'white money' earned through rightful means, and, by implication, *kṛṣṇa dravya* for 'black money'.

In chapter 117 it has been declared that one having no faith, a sinful person, an atheist, one with a split mind and a disputant —these five do not get the benefit of a visit to a holy place.

At the time when this Purāṇa was composed very early marriage was in vogue, as is indicated by the injunction of the Purāṇa (vide ch. 118) that a man should marry his daughter before she has attained puberty, with this further remark that wise men recommend a girl's marriage when she is eight years old.

Finally, the Purāṇa (ch. 126) gives a list of a few apparently good practices which become worthless under certain circumstances: e.g. religious practices accompanied by hypocrisy are worthless; penance becomes worthless by anger; knowledge without practical application is worthless; a gift given to a brāhmaṇa who is not learned in worthless, etc. —G. P. BHATT

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Common and self-evident abbreviations such as Ch(s)—Chapter(s), p—page, pp—pages, v—verse, vv—verses, Ftn—Footnote, Hist. Ind. Philo.—History of Indian Philosophy are not included in this list.

ABORI	*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona
AGP	S.M. Ali's *The Geography of Purāṇas*, PPH, New Delhi, 1973
AIHT	*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, F. E. Pargiter, Motilal Banarsidass (MLBD), Delhi
AITM	*Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology* Series, MLBD, Delhi
AP	*Agni Purāṇa*, Guru Mandal Edition (GM), Calcutta, 1957
Arch.S.Rep.	Archaeological Survey Report
AV	*Atharva Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Bd. P.	*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, MLBD, Delhi 1973
BG	*Bhagavadgītā*
Bh. P.	*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Bhagavat Vidyapeeth, Ahmedabad
Br.	*Brāhmaṇa* (preceded by name such as Śatapatha)
BS. P.	*Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, Vishnu Shastri Bapat, Wai
BV. P.	*Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa*, GM, 1955-57
CC	*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* by Hemādri
CVS	*Caraṇa Vyūha Sūtra* by Śaunaka, Com. by Mahīdāsa
DB	*Devī Bhagavata*, GM, 1960-61
De or GDAMI	*The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India*, N.L. De, Oriental Reprint, Delhi, 1971
Dh. S.	*Dharma Sūtra* (preceded by the author's name such as Gautama)
ERE	*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* by Hastings
GP	*Garuḍa Purāṇa*, ed. R. S. Bhattacharya, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1964

GS	*Gṛhya Sūtra* (preceded by the name of the author such as Āpastamba)
HD	*History of Dharma Śāstra*, P.V. Kane, G. O. S.
IA	*The Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*The Indian Historical Quarterly*
JP	*Purāṇa* (Journal of the Kashiraj Trust), Varanasi
KA	*Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*
KP	*Kūrma Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press Edn., Bombay; also Kashiraj Trust Edn., Varanasi, 1971
LP	*Liṅga Purāṇa*, GM, 1960; also MLBD, Delhi, 1981
Manu.	*Manusmṛti*
Mbh.	*Mahābhārata*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2014
MkP	*Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*
MN	*Mahābhārata Nāmānukramaṇī*, Gītā Press, Gorakhpur, VS 2016
MtP	*Matsya Purāṇa*, GM, 1954
MW	Monier Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, MLBD, Delhi, 1976
NP	*Nāradīya* or *Nārada Purāṇa*, Veṅkaṭeśvara Press, Bombay
PCK	*Bhāratavarṣīya Prācīna Caritrakośa*, Siddheshwar Shastri, Poona, 1968
Pd. P.	*Padma Purāṇa*, GM, 1957-59
PE	*Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, V. Mani, English version, MLBD, Delhi, 1975
PR or PRHRC	*Puranic Records on Hindu Rites and Customs*, R. C. Hazra, Calcutta, 1948
ṚV	*Ṛg-Veda*, Svādhyāya Maṇḍal, Aundh
Śat. Br.	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
SC or SMC	*Smṛti Candrikā* by Devanna Bhaṭṭa
SEP	*Studies in Epics and Purāṇas*, A.D. Pusalkar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (BVB), Bombay

CHAPTER EIGHTYTWO

The Greatness of Viṣṇu's Devotees

Pārvatī said:

1. O lord of the universe, O master, tell what are said to be the characteristics of Viṣṇu's devotees, and what is their importance.

Mahādeva said:

2-9. Since he belongs to Viṣṇu, he is looked upon as a follower (or devotee) of Viṣṇu. Brahmā should be known as the source of all and as one who has taken up a form. From him brāhmaṇas, masters of the Vedas, are born. They should be known as Viṣṇu's devotees and never the others. He who possesses purity, truth, forgiveness, who is free from attachment and hatred, who knows the ideas contained in the Vedic lore, is known as a devotee of Viṣṇu. He who is always engaged in keeping the sacred fire, who always honours his guests, who is devoted to his father and mother, is called a devotee of Viṣṇu. He who is having the virtue of compassion, who is averse to sins, who is marked with a conch and a disc, is called Viṣṇu's devotee. He who wears a garland round his neck, who always utters (the name of) Rāma with his mouth, who would always devotedly sing (Viṣṇu's praise), is said to be Viṣṇu's devotee. Those men who are always devoted to the Purāṇas, who are always engaged in (performing) sacrifices, should be known to be Viṣṇu's devotees, and are dear to all sects. Those sinful men who censure them, repeatedly go to (i.e. are born in) bad stocks after their death.

10-17. Those brāhmaṇas who always honour the image named Gopāla, fashioning it from a metal only with four hands, and well decorated, worship it, are known to enjoy religious merit. Those brāhmaṇas who after having fashioned an image (of Viṣṇu) from stone and called Kṛṣṇa and beautiful in form, worship it, should be known to be of meritorious forms. Where there is the Śālagrāma stone, where there is the stone from Dvārakā, or where there is the combination of these two, there is salvation. There is no doubt about this. If after install-

ing the image with (i.e. to the accompaniment of) a hymn, one worships it, then that worship gives a crorefold merit. It leads to religious merit, acquisition of worldly prosperity, satisfaction of sensual desires and salvation. Devotion of nine kinds[1] should be shown for Viṣṇu. Therefore, you should make the image of stone or metal. Devotees should meditate upon it and worship it. A devotee should offer to the image worship with kingly attendance. One should always remember lord Viṣṇu, the soul of all, the only refuge of the helpless and the poor, and the cause of the existence of the worlds. One should always remember (Viṣṇu), destroyer of great sins, (as present) in that image and say 'This is Gopāla, so also Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma.'

18-30. He who worships (the lord) properly, is a man of the lord. The best men, the followers of Viṣṇu, should fashion the form (of the image) like that as was taken up by Keśava (i.e. Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu) in Gokula. A wise man should fashion his form for self-gratification. By (doing) this, ample devotion is produced. There is no doubt about this. In that image should be fashioned especially a conch, a disc, a mace and (other) weapons of Viṣṇu according to (proper) measure. One should get fashioned an image having four arms, two eyes, holding a conch, a disc and a mace, wearing a yellow garment, beautiful, very large, wearing a garland of wood-flowers, and with bright ear-rings of lapis lazuli, having gems on the crown, and always shining with Kaustubha. (It should be) of gold, silver, copper or brass. (He should) get it installed especially by best brāhmaṇas with Vedic hymns as given in the sacred texts. After that it should be worshipped according to the (injunctions in) holy texts. The worship should be duly offered with hymns and in sixteen ways[2] of doing homage. When Viṣṇu is worshipped, all deities are worshipped. Therefore, the great lord should be worshipped in this way. The god without beginning and end,

---

1. Navadhā Bhakti—Listening to the praise of Viṣṇu, narration of his virtues, remembering him, serving his feet, worshipping him, saluting him, servitude to him, his friendship, and offering oneself to him.

2. Ṣoḍaśopacāra—Sixteen ways of doing homage to a deity etc: Offering a seat, reception, offering water for washing feet, for rinsing the month, respectful offering, giving water for sipping, madhuparka, bath, garments, ornaments, sandal, flowers, incense, lamp, eatables, salutation.

holding a conch, a disc, a mace, and the lord of all gives everything to his followers, of the nature of merit. As is Viṣṇu, so is Śiva. There is absolutely no difference between the two. O goddess, knowing like this, the fashioning of the images of both should be done. There is no doubt that he who worships Śiva and is given to censuring Viṣṇu, lives in the Raurava hell. I am Viṣṇu, I am Rudra, I am Brahmā, the grandsire. I repeatedly and constantly live in all beings.

Pārvatī said:

31. O Maheśvara, tell me properly about the characteristics of those who are said to be the servants and followers and devotees of Viṣṇu?

Mahādeva said:

32-39. Śūdras are his servants, Nārada and others are his followers, and O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, Prahlāda, Ambarīṣa and others are his devotees. He who is always engaged in a rite in honour of the Supreme Being, who recites the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas, and has the marks of a conch and a disc is said to be a Vaiṣṇava. That śūdra who is always engaged in serving brāhmaṇas, who always worships Viṣṇu, and listens generally to the Purāṇas that are acceptable to the Vedas, is said to be Viṣṇu's servant, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. He who resorts to (i.e. looks upon himself as a child of) five years and is devoted in many ways, is called Viṣṇu's devotee, and is approved of among (i.e. by) all good men. O you beautiful young lady, Dhruva and others, so also Ambarīṣa and others are said to be devotees of all times by the sages. In the Kali age śūdras very much devoted to meditation on Viṣṇu, are most blessed. They enjoy happiness in this world, and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. That śūdra who has the marks of a conch and a disc, and who is devoted to Viṣṇu, and who celebrates especially the four festivals, is the servant of Viṣṇu, as it is seen and heard.

CHAPTER EIGHTYTHREE

The Swing Festival

Pārvatī said:

1-3. O Maheśvara, tell me about the rites (performed) in all months. A great festival is to be celebrated (in these months). Which is the accepted manner (in which the festival is to be celebrated)? O lord of gods, tell me which the deity is who is to be worshipped, what his greatness would be, and on which day (of the month) it is to be performed. What is told to the devotees of Viṣṇu of meritorious deeds about the month? I am blessed, I am fortunate, I am lucky on the earth, that I (shall) hear the story of Viṣṇu (from you) by seeing you and coming in your contact.

Śiva said:

4-18. I shall, O sinless one, tell you the mode of the festivals, hearing which you will be delighted as by songs and musical instruments. First, especially on the Ekādaśī of the bright fortnight of the very auspicious month of Caitra one should worship (Viṣṇu) mounted on a swing. O goddess, one should always devoutly celebrate the festival according to the rule. They (who) see Kṛṣṇa, remover of the blemishes of the Kali age, mounted upon the swing, are, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, free from thousands of offences. The sins committed during crores of existences remain as long as one would not swing god (Viṣṇu), the lord of the universe, the master of the universe. Those who in the Kali age see Janārdana mounted upon the swing, are freed even though (they have committed) the sin of killing a cow. What then can be said about others? Gods, along with Rudra, being delighted at the swing festival, jubilantly dance, sing, and play upon musical instruments in the courtyard. Sages, the attendants of Śiva, gandharvas, the groups of the celestial nymphs like Rambhā, so also the serpents led by Vāsuki, so also deities and chief gods, desiring to see Viṣṇu come to the swing (festival). On the swing (festival) day in the vernal season beings are present for (i.e. at the time of) the swing festival, and O great goddess, those

belonging to a heavenly stock also certainly go (there) when (the image of) Kṛṣṇa is (placed) on the swing. Seeing Viṣṇu on the swing, there is a festival for the three worlds. Therefore, giving up a hundred other occupations celebrate a festival on the swing (festival) day. Prahlāda comes there. Viṣṇu mounts on the swing, O great goddess. Remembering him who grants a boon (one should celebrate the festival). Those who keep awake (on that night) remembering Kṛṣṇa on the swing, receive the fruit of all their religious merit in a moment. Those who see Viṣṇu on the swing in the spring, being saluted by the god of gods, play with Viṣṇu. One seeing (the image of) the god facing the south and mounted on the swing, O goddess, is free from (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa on seeing Viṣṇu (just) once. 'Om, we know the god mounted on the swing. We think of Mādhava. May that god urge us on'. This is the worship with the Gāyatrī (hymn).

19-34. 'Repeated salutations to Mādhava, Govinda, Śrī-kaṇṭha'. The worship should be done to the accompaniment of the hymn and according to the rule. Being composed he should give a gift to his preceptor according to his capacity. He should devoutly sing (the praise) of Viṣṇu; then the (worship) will be complete. O you beautiful lady, what is the use of repeatedly saying other things? Viṣṇu remaining on the swing removes all sins. He, worshipped properly by men, always gives everything. Where (Viṣṇu) remains on the swing, gods, and kinnaras with gandharvas come there. There is no doubt about this. There he should worship Viṣṇu with the hymn, *Om, Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya* ('Om, Salutation to the lord Vāsudeva'). With this hymn he should worship (Viṣṇu). He should do the worship according to the rule and in sixteen ways of doing homage (to Viṣṇu). All his desires for virtue, material welfare etc. would certainly get fulfilled. O you of a good vow, all that like the assignment of (the various parts of) the body, hand etc., should be done with (i.e. to the accompaniment) of this hymn. The festival should be celebrated with the hymn as told in the holy text. He should keep (the image of) the deity (Viṣṇu) along with Lakṣmī on the swing. In front of (the image of) the deity he should install (the images of) Nārada etc.—the divine sages. So also the devotees like Viśvaksena should always be installed in

the front. The wise one should wave the light with the sound of five musical instruments. O goddess, in every watch he should be carefully worshipped. He should offer him respectful offering with coconuts and white banana plants. He should be carefully worshipped, O goddess. 'O god of gods, O lord of the world, O holder of a conch, a disc and a mace, accept the worship. Favour me.' The remnants of the offering should be given to Viṣṇu's devotees. The devotees of Viṣṇu should play upon musical instruments and dance there. Then especially the swinging (of the swing) should be done. O goddess, all the holy and sacred places that are there on the earth, come there to witness (the festival) on that day. Knowing like this, O goddess, the great festival should be celebrated. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras and all other castes should be looked upon to be holding a conch, a disc, a mace.

CHAPTER EIGHTYFOUR

The Damanaka Festival

Mahādeva said:

1-19. In this month of Caitra itself, the Damanaka festival should be celebrated; and especially on the twelfth day the rite should be properly performed. (This festival) meritorious and enhancing the joy of the people, should be devoutly celebrated by the devotees of Viṣṇu. The blossom of Damanaka that has originated from the joy of gods should be offered by the devotees, the followers of Viṣṇu, desiring the fruit of the entire worship on the twelfth day of the bright half of Caitra, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. With the mind fixed on the great festival a man should celebrate it with great devotion. O you sinless one, having first gone to a grove, (a man) should worship (the deity) with Rati, according to the preceptor's order (saying), 'Salutation to you, O Kāmadeva, deluding all. I shall look out (for you) for Viṣṇu. (Please) favour me.' He (i.e. his image)

should be brought home to the accompaniment of the sounds of singing and musical instruments. O best among the gods, Viṣṇu's devotees should devoutly worship him at night after preliminary consecration of his image at night. Then before him (i.e. his image) an auspicious circle should be drawn all round. Then he should install him there with Rati. The wise one should (then) cover the image with a white (piece of) cloth; and should place damanaka. The best brāhmaṇas, the devotees of Viṣṇu, should perform the worship there only. 'Klīṁ, salutation to Kāmadeva. Hrīṁ, salutation to Rati also.' A wise man, after installing (the image of) Kandarpa in the quarter of Indra (i.e. the east), should worship (the image). O chief among gods, at night offering of sandal, flowers, so also incense, lamp, waving of lights should be devoutly and in the proper manner done. (Saying) 'Salutation to Madana' (he should) worship in the east. (Saying) 'Salutation to Manmatha' (he should) worship in the south-east. (Saying) 'Salutation to Kandarpa' (he should worship) in the south. (Saying) 'Salutation to Anaṅga' (he should worship) in the rakṣa (i.e. the south-west) direction. (Saying) 'Salutation to him whose body was reduced to ash' (he should worship) in the west. (Saying) 'Salutation to Smara' (he should worship) in the north-east. (Saying) 'Salutation to Īśvara' (he should worship) in the north. (Saying) 'Salutation to Puṣpa-bāṇa' (i.e. having arrows of flowers) (he should worship) in the north-east. In all the four directions he should worship (the image of) him. Then worshipping damanaka with sacred rice grains, incense, lamps, offerings of eatables, tāmbūlas, he should salute damanaka after consecrating it with the recitation done one hundred and eight times of the Kāma-Gāyatrī (hymn): 'We know that Puruṣa, Kāmadeva. We reflect on him. May that Anaṅga urge us on'. (Then he should say:) 'Salutation to Puṣpabāṇa giving joy to the world; (salutation) to Manmatha, the eye of the world, and to him who delights Rati. Salutation to you, O god of gods. O Śrī Viśveśa (i.e. the lord of the universe), salutation to you. Salutation to you, O lord of Rati; salutation to you, O ornament of the universe. O lord of the world, salutation to you. Salutation to you, O origin of everything.' With such various types of hymns, especially with those that are told in the sacred texts, Janārdana, along with Lakṣmī, should be carefully worshipped. Then the

wise (man) should report the act (to the lord), and keep awake. (He should say), 'O god of gods, O lord of the world, O you who give the desired objects, O you dear to Kāmeśvarī, O Viṣṇu, fulfil the desire in my heart'. Śrīnivāsa, Jagannātha (i.e. Viṣṇu) who desires the good of his devotees, should be carefully worshipped with many such hymns. He should offer damanaka to deities like Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu. Then (he should offer) a great worship with incense etc. And a great festival should be celebrated with songs, musical instruments, dancing etc. A pitcher is placed before the deity. Having poured water from the pitcher on the feet of the deity, he should have water-sport on that day. Then he should devoutly worship his preceptor with garments, ornaments and money. Then he should eat along with his kinsmen—the devotees of Viṣṇu.

Mahādeva said:

20-31. Then he should worship Viṣṇu with damanaka-sprouts. When Viṣṇu is worshipped, I am always worshipped. O goddess, on seeing the damanaka festival, he who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or snatched away gold, or is a drunkard, or eats flesh, is freed from the sin. O goddess, those good devotees of Viṣṇu who have worshipped the deity with damanaka, with damanaka-sprout, have visited all the sacred places. He who has worshipped Viṣṇu with a (damanaka-)sprout, has studied the Vedas, all holy texts, and maintained the sacred fire. His family—whether of a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra or (of) any other (caste)—is lucky, is said to be very lucky. Being born in a family in which the damanaka festival is celebrated, is blessed. So also he who has worshipped Viṣṇu. O goddess, having worshipped (Viṣṇu) with damanaka when spring has arrived, he gets the fruit of the gift of a thousand cows. He who would with great devotion worship Viṣṇu with jasmine flowers in the spring, would obtain salvation. Maruka and damanaka instantly pleased Viṣṇu. Therefore, the best men, Viṣṇu's devotees, should worship (Viṣṇu with these). When he has worshipped Viṣṇu, he has made (a gift of) a thousand cows, has given his daughter (in marriage to a worthy groom), has given the gift of the earth. Of him who, having taken but one damanaka-sprout, worships the lord of gods when spring has come, O daughter

of the (Himālaya) Mountain, I do not know the measure of his religious merit. He having four arms enjoys the fruits of merit, worldly objects, sensual desires here (i.e. in this world) and in the next world, and enjoys Viṣṇu's position.

CHAPTER EIGHTYFIVE

The Śayana Festival of Viṣṇu

Mahādeva said:

1-11. A devotee of Viṣṇu should devoutly and with joy worship and celebrate the festival of the lord of the world lying in water on the full-moon day of Vaiśākha. Having had songs, (having played upon) musical instruments, having danced and celebrated the auspicious great festival, he should, being delighted, see the best god on the Ekādaśī (day). Devoutly singing a song in praise of Viṣṇu, he should celebrate the auspicious festival. 'O lord of gods, lie in this water. When, O lord of gods, you are asleep, the world also is asleep.' On the advent of the rainy season, those men who put Viṣṇu in water, have no torment in hell, O best goddess. The bed called Viṣṇu, should be made in a golden vessel, or a silver vessel, or a copper vessel, O best goddess. Or it should be made in an earthen vessel. Having put there cold water made fragrant, the wise man should install in that water (the image of) Viṣṇu. The image should have the name of Gopāla or of Rāma. Or especially a Śālagrāma stone should be installed. Or an image of that stone (should be put). Its merit is unending. As long as the earth, the people on it, the moon and the sun are there, no one in his family would be a hellish being. Therefore, O great goddess, he should worship Viṣṇu in water. The man, free from torment, would exist till the final deluge. During the time of Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha he should worship Viṣṇu covered with a Tulasī leaf in very cold water.

12-20. Those who worship Viṣṇu remaining in water with various flowers during the time of Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha, are free

from Yama's torment. As water is most dear to Viṣṇu, as he lies in water, as he likes water, so, especially in summer, (a man) should worship Viṣṇu remaining in water. He who, after making the image of Śālagrāma stone of the deity lie in water, has worshipped it, would emancipate his family. He, O beautiful one, who has devoutly worshipped Viṣṇu in water when the Sun is in Cancer (the fourth sign of the Zodiac), or especially when he is in Gemini (the third sign of the Zodiac), and he who has offered worship to the lord remaining and lying in water, has performed crores of hundreds of sacrifices. Those men who in the month called Mādhava (i.e. Vaiśākha) worship (the image of) Viṣṇu after putting it in water are gods on the earth. He who having prepared (the mixture of) sandal and water in a pot, would put (into it the image of) Viṣṇu, and worship it at night on Dvādaśī, would get salvation. These five—one who has no faith, one of a sinful mind, an atheist, one whose doubt has not been removed, and one who acts from a (selfish) motive—do not enjoy the fruit of the worship. In the same way, O great goddess, a man who everyday worships the lord of the world while he is in water, is freed from great sins.

21-30. O chief goddess, the worship to him is said to be offered with (i.e. to the accompaniment of) the hymn, 'Om, Hrīṁ, Hrīṁ, salutation to Rāma. Om, Klīṁ, salutation to Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, dear to the cowherdesses'. With this hymn, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he should consecrate the water. (He should say:) 'O god of gods, O noble one, O you having the mark of Śrīvatsa, O great god, salutation to you. O cause of the world, salutation to you. O god, accept the respectful offering and always give me salvation'. With flowers of various kinds he should worship Viṣṇu. Free from all troubles he would be absorbed into Viṣṇu. Being very much concentrated he should keep awake on Dvādaśī. He should devoutly worship the immutable and inexhaustible god, Viṣṇu. Those who are intent on devotion and desire devotion should celebrate the festival called Viṣṇu(-festival) in the month of Vaiśākha. He should perform the rites in it as told in the holy texts. When this is done, O great goddess, it is equal to the fruit of a crore of sacrifices. He being free from attachment and hatred and turning away great delusion, goes to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu

after having enjoyed happiness in the world. A brāhmaṇa who on the earth devoutly celebrates (this) festival, gets free from sins, and certainly goes to Vaikuṇṭha. A man deprived of Vedic studies and without the study of holy texts gets Viṣṇu's position on having devotion for Viṣṇu. He would be delighted in self, would always be free, and would have conquered his self. He goes to Viṣṇu's position (and remains there) as long as the Moon and the Sun (exist).

CHAPTER EIGHTYSIX

The Investiture of the Sacred Thread

Mahādeva said:

1-19. When the month of Śrāvaṇa comes the rite of the investiture of the sacred thread should be performed, having done which divine devotion is produced. O Pārvatī, the wise ones should perform, with faith, Viṣṇu's investiture of the sacred thread. (By doing that) his worship in the rainy season becomes complete. On Viṣṇu's investiture of the sacred thread one gets pleasure. One would get various pleasures on having always properly worshipped Viṣṇu. Having brought a thread, a garment spun by a brāhmaṇa woman (he should do the rite). Or he should use there (i.e. for this rite) thread spun by himself. Or similarly he should get a thread spun by a good śūdra woman. Or he should properly have one through sale. The rite of the investiture (of the thread) should be done with silken cloth only. So also (the sacred thread for) god Viṣṇu should be made of silver. Or, O chief goddess, it should be especially made of gold according to the rule. In the absence of all metals the wise ones should take (a cotton) thread. The thread reaching the feet is said to be the best. The one up to the knees (is said to be) middling. The one reaching the navel (is said to be) inferior. A wise one should have the investiture (of any one of these threads). The thread should have the knots numbering the days of the year, or half the number, or one hundred and eight. O

Pārvatī, it is also proper (to have one) having half the number. On the phallus it is known as liṅga, and should be accompanied by Gaṅgā and the serpents. O goddess, on the image the sacred thread should be of wood flowers. It should be prepared beautifully, by which Viṣṇu is pleased. One good sacred thread called *gandha* should always be prepared by men, Viṣṇu's devotees, and it should have only one strand. In the same way the thread sacred to the deity Viṣṇu is also said to be (so) for the gods. So also (for) the devotees like Ambarīṣa and Dhruva. Then, O Pārvatī, sacred threads should be offered here (i.e. in this rite). The first day is recommended for investiture with the sacred thread of Kubera. The second is said to be the best of days for goddess Lakṣmī. The third for you, and the fourth for Gajānana. The fifth is for the Moon, and the sixth for Kārtikeya. The seventh is said (i.e. recommended) for the Sun; for Durgā the eighth is told, the ninth for the divine mothers and similarly the tenth is (recommended) for Yama. The eleventh is (recommended) for all (deities), and the twelfth for Viṣṇu. The thirteenth is for Madana, and the fourteenth is said to be for Śarva. Similarly the fifteenth (day of the fortnight) is recommended for Brahmā's worship.

20-27. These are said to be the proper days of investiture with the sacred thread. Twelve is said to be inferior. Double (the number) is said to be middling; and thrice the number (i.e. thirtysix) is said to be the number of knots on the sacred thread. Have it dyed with camphor and saffron, sandal and turmeric. Having dyed all this, and having put it in a new casket, all those should be placed like a deity (at the place) where the worship of the deity (is to be performed). First, worship of the deity should be done. (Then) garment with the thread (should be put on). After the sacred thread is put on, the worship is said to be done. In the sacred threads the deities would be in proximity. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra are the three deities of the sacred thread. Kriyā, Pauruṣī, Vīrā, the fourth (being) Aparājitā, Jayā and Vijayā, Muktidā, so also Sadāśivā, the ninth (is) Manonmanī, and the tenth Sarvatomukhī—these are the deities of the knots. He should install them on the threads. Then with (appropriate) finger position according to the rule of

the holy texts, he should invoke them. This is said to be properly placing them in proximity.

28-35. The placing in proximity is done by the finger position (called) *sannidhi-mudrā*. Then having protected them with (the finger position called) *rakṣā* (i.e. protection)-*mudrā* and having immortalised them with (the finger position called) *dhenu-mudrā* he should bring them before the deity. Taking water from the pitcher he should sprinkle them with hymns from the sacred texts. The sprinkling (should be done) with the hymn: 'Klīṁ, to Kṛṣṇa'. Then having offered sandal, incense, eatables, having given tāmbūla etc., having worshipped the deities of the sacred thread in the sixteen ways of doing homage, having incensed the fragrant sacred thread, and facing the deity he should consecrate it with (the finger position) called *namaskāra-mudrā* (i.e. mudrā of salutation): 'O Mahādeva, with the goddess and attendants etc. you are invited by means of these hymns. O lord Viṣṇu, come along with the regents of quarters and attendants for the fulfilment of the rite. In the morning we shall worship you. Be constantly in the proximity.' Having put in the morning that sandal and sacred thread at the feet of god Rāghava, Viṣṇu, and having performed his rite(s) and with the repetition three times of the words, 'This is an auspicious day' and with the preliminary religious rite and with words of victory and with the auspicious sounds of bells, musical instruments and of drums he should offer the worship. He should worship in the proper order: first the seniormost, then the middling and (lastly) the inferior. With the hymn 'We know Vāsudeva, we think of god Viṣṇu; may the god urge us on', or with his own hymns he should offer the great delightful worship, having offered which Viṣṇu, the soul, is pleased. All round illumination should be done according to the rule. The wise man should also get prepared four kinds of food. O beautiful one, then the sacred threads that are worshipped should be given (to brāhmaṇas). Then he should especially worship his teacher with devotion. The great preceptor should be worshipped with the rite (of offering) garments and ornaments. After having worshipped his preceptor he should wear the sacred thread. Then having given tāmbūlas to those who are Viṣṇu's devotees and a full oblation to Agni, he should report the act to Śrīnivāsa, Śrī

Kṛṣṇa. (He should say:) 'O Viṣṇu, may that (act of having) worshipped you without the (proper) hymns, the (proper) acts, and without devotion, be certainly well completed'. Then having called (his relatives) he should eat the cooked food with his dear relatives, Viṣṇu's devotees, and brāhmaṇas. Those best brāhmaṇas who listen to this divine worship are free from all sins and go to the highest position of Viṣṇu.

36-41. There is no doubt that as long as the Moon shines, the Sun shines, he who has investiture of the sacred thread shines like them. On having the investiture with the sacred thread all the gifts and restraints that there are on the earth, become perfect. This rite of the investiture of the sacred thread is the king of festivals. A killer of a brāhmaṇa is purified by it. No doubt should be raised about this. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, what is said is the truth, the (absolute) truth. The religious merit that is said (to result) from the investiture of the sacred thread is also said (to be had) from seeing it. O noble one, the śūdras who have devoutly performed this rite of the investiture of the sacred thread, are said to be most fortunate. I am lucky, I am blessed, I am fortunate, (as) the devotion I had for Viṣṇu, gives salvation.

CHAPTER EIGHTYSEVEN

Monthly Offering of Flowers to Viṣṇu

Maheśvara said:

1-13. In Caitra Viṣṇu who removes sufferings should be carefully worshipped with campaka or jasmine flowers. One should worship the lord of the worlds, the lord of the lords of all, viz. Viṣṇu, with damanaka, maruka, and bilva flowers. Or (one) being very calm, should (worship him) with divine, red lotuses. O chief goddess, men worship Viṣṇu in the month of Caitra. O goddess, and in Vaiśākha the great lord should always be worshipped. He who has devoutly worshipped Viṣṇu, taking (i.e. with) a ketakī-leaf, when the Sun is in the sign

Taurus of the Zodiac, is pleased for a hundred ages of Manu. When the month of Jyeṣṭha comes, he should worship (Viṣṇu) with various flowers. When the lord of gods is worshipped, all gods are worshipped well. They too, (even) after having committed thousands of (minor) sins and hundreds of major sins, will go there where Viṣṇu dwells with Lakṣmī. When the month of Āṣāḍha comes, they should especially worship (Viṣṇu). Those men who always worship Viṣṇu with (flowers of) karavīra, red flowers and lotuses, are meritorious. Those who will worship Viṣṇu with gold-like flowers and kadamba flowers, have no fear from (Śani) the Sun's son. Viṣṇu worshipped with kadamba flowers at the advent of the rainy season, gives desired objects as long as the fourteen Indras (last). Viṣṇu, the creator of the world, becomes as pleased on having kadamba flower(s) as by obtaining Lakṣmī. O best goddess, Viṣṇu worshipped with Tulasī, black Tulasī and aśoka flowers, always removes (the devotee's) affliction. (Viṣṇu is pleased with them) who worship him when the month of Śrāvaṇa comes with hemp-flower or dūrvā-blade.

14-27. He should especially be carefully worshipped with various flowers. He gives many desired objects till the final deluge. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, listen. When the month of Bhādrapada comes, he who worships Viṣṇu with campaka flowers, white flowers and red sindūra flowers, with white lotuses, O great goddess, would obtain the fruit of all his desires. In the auspicious month of Āśvina worship to Viṣṇu should be offered with jasmine flowers, so also with various kinds of flowers. (Viṣṇu) should be carefully and devoutly worshipped by all people. Those men who by bringing lotuses only worship Viṣṇu, obtain on the earth religious merit, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyments and salvation. When the month of Kārtika comes, the great lord should be worshipped. As many seasonal flowers as are there should be offered to Viṣṇu. With sesamum and sesamum flowers he should offer worship. When the lord of gods is pleased, the man obtains unending fruit. Those who worship Viṣṇu in Kārtika with bakula flowers, punnāga and campaka flowers are gods, and not men. In Mārgaśīrṣa the lord should always be worshipped with various flowers, offerings of eatables, incense and waving lights. In

Mārgaśīrṣa he should worship Viṣṇu especially with divine flowers. O great goddess, in the month of Pauṣa good worship with various Tulasī leaves and water mixed with musk should be done, and when the month of Māgha has come, he should worship Viṣṇu with various flowers. When the supreme lord of the gods is worshipped, a man certainly gets his desired object. The worship should be done with camphor or various eatables like sweetmeats. When Phālguna comes, Viṣṇu's worship should be done. He should fully perform the vernal worship after bringing flowers, or, O chief goddess, he should worship him with new flowers. When the lord of the world is worshipped, a man gets the eternal position of Viṣṇu by Viṣṇu's favour.

CHAPTER EIGHTYEIGHT

Dialogue Between Satyabhāmā and Kṛṣṇa

Hereafter (the narration of) the importance of the month of Kārtika is commenced.

Sūta said:

1-17. Once the sage (Nārada) came taking with him divine flowers and (those) of the desire-yielding tree to Dvārakā to see Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa welcomed and honoured Nārada. Offering him a seat, he said: "This is a respectful offering; this is water for washing your feet." And Nārada offered those flowers to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa distributed them among (his) sixteen thousand wives. The lord, forgetting Satyabhāmā, gave them to all (other wives). Then getting angry Satyabhāmā entered the anger-chamber. Calm Kṛṣṇa knowing that went there and bringing Satyabhāmā, he mentally recollected Garuḍa. By merely being remembered, Garuḍa, coming there, stood before him. Having quickly mounted on the bird, the lord said to his dear (wife Satyabhāmā): "O Satyā, do not be angry; for you, opposing the lord of gods with the deities, I shall plant the desire-yielding tree in your courtyard. O noble

one, pardon my fault." Making a pledge like this with Satyabhāmā, he quickly went to the world of deities (i.e. heaven) where that god (Indra), the killer of Vṛtra, was. Being solicited for the desire-yielding tree, (Indra) replied to the lord: "O god, O lord, it is not proper for you to take this tree to the earth." Then the large-armed (Kṛṣṇa) took out the tree from (i.e. with) the root, and the very strong one put it on his vehicle (i.e. Garuḍa). Then the wielder of the thunderbolt (i.e. Indra), the strong (god), speedily raised the thunderbolt and struck Garuḍa (with it saying:) "Leave the desire-yielding tree". Then Garuḍa, to honour the thunderhold, dropped one feather. Due to that stroke of the thunderbolt, three birds (animals?) sprang up: the peacock, the mongoose and the blue jay. Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā. Having come, he planted it in Satyabhāmā's house. Then only Nārada came and was very much honoured by Satyā.

Satyabhāmā said:

(Please) tell me how I should get such a desire-yielding tree and such a husband as the lord in every existence.

Thus asked, Nārada, the best sage, then said: "O Satyabhāmā, he is obtained by means of the gift of tulāpuruṣa." Then Satyabhāmā having weighed Kṛṣṇa according to the precept in the holy text, gave (the articles equal to his weight) along with the desiring-yielding tree to Nārada. Taking all the articles, Nārada went to heaven.

Sūta said:

18. When Nārada had gone after bidding farewell to Kṛṣṇa, Satyā with her face blooming with joy said to Kṛṣṇa:

Satyabhāmā said:

19-25a. I am blessed; I am fortunate. My existence is fruitful. My parents who certainly produced me as the (most) favourite wife in the three worlds, are lucky in being the cause of my birth, as I am (most) dear to you among (your) sixteen thousand wives. (I am lucky) since I duly gave, according to the rite as told (in the holy text), (the articles equal to the weight of) the

lord of creation with the desire-yielding tree to Nārada. That desire-yielding tree whose account the beings on the earth perhaps know, now stands in my house(?). I am also very dear to Kṛṣṇa, the lord of the three worlds. Therefore, O Madhusūdana, I desire to ask you something. If you are my benefactor, then tell this in detail. Hearing that I shall again do what is beneficial to me, so that, O god, I shall never be separated from you till (the end of) the kalpa.

Sūta said:

25b-27. Hearing these words of his dear (wife), Kṛṣṇa, with a smile on his face, put his hand into that of Satyā, and went with pleasure to the foot of the desiring-yielding tree with his beloved after having forbidden his attendants (to follow them). Having laughed and called Satyā, the lord of the worlds with the hair on his body bristling and with horripilation spoke (to her) to please and delight her.

Kṛṣṇa said:

28-30. O dear one, out of my sixteen thousand wives no beautiful lady other than you is dear to me. You are (just) like my life. For you I had a quarrel with (Indra) the lord of gods along with the (other) deities. Listen, O dear one; (I shall give you) whatever is solicited by you, whether it is small or big, even if it cannot be (easily) given, done, or expressed. Then, O dear one, how shall I not tell (i.e. give the answer to) the question put by you? Ask everything that is in your mind. I shall tell (i.e. answer) it.

Satyā said:

31-33. Formerly (i.e. in my previous existence) which gift (did I give), which vow (did I observe), or which penance did I practise, that I, a mortal, have become like Pārvatī in this mortal (world), and that I always occupy half (the portion) of your body, always ride Garuḍa, and went with you to the abode of deities like Indra? Therefore, I desire to ask you, what auspicious (act) I did in the other (i.e. previous) existence, what (kind of) character I had, and whose daughter I was.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

34-45. O dear one, listen attentively. I shall tell you all about the auspicious vow you observed in your former existence. At the end of the Kṛta age in Māyāpurī there was an excellent brāhmaṇa of Atri's family, Devaśarman by name, who had mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. He was hospitable. He attended (sacred) fire. He was greatly devoted to the vow (in honour) of the Sun. Actually being like another Sun, he every-day propitiated the Sun. The old man had a daughter, Guṇavatī by name. Being sonless, he gave his daughter to his disciple named Candra(śarman). He (i.e. Devaśarman) looked upon him as his (own) son, and he who had controlled his passions, looked upon him as his father. The two, desiring to collect kuśas and fuel, once went to a forest. The two then roamed in the forest at the foot of the Himālaya mountain. Then they saw a fierce demon coming (to them). With their entire body overcome by fear, and unable to run (away), they were killed by the demon with Death-like form. My attendants, moving with me, took them to Vaikuṇṭha-abode due to the efficacy of the region and their religiousness. I was indeed very much pleased with them by virtue of just that act of them, viz. they, as long as they were alive, worshipped the Sun etc. As the rain-water goes to the ocean, the followers of Śiva, the Sun, Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, so also the worshippers of Śakti come to me only. I am one, born in five ways, and play with names—as one Devadatta calls his sons etc. with (various) names. Then the two lived in my house; moved in an aeroplane; had the brilliance of the Sun; resembled me in form; were near me; enjoyed divine beautiful women and pleasures like (being smeared with) sandal.

CHAPTER EIGHTYNINE

An Account of Satyabhāmā's Former Birth

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

1-4. Then Guṇavatī, after hearing that the two were killed by a demon, being overcome by grief for her father and husband, lamented piteously: "O lord, O father, where have you gone leaving me (and) without me? Today without you what should I, a young helpless girl, do? Who will affectionately look after me who am adept in nothing, who am grieved, who am living in the house with food, covering etc.? I am unlucky; my happiness is destroyed; my lord is killed; my life is doomed. To whom should I, a helpless young (woman), resort to today?"

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

5-14. Thus having very much lamented like a much afflicted osprey she, being dispirited, fell on the ground like a plantain tree struck by (stormy) wind. Having revived after a long time and lamenting on the ground very piteously, she plunged into the ocean of grief and was overcome by it. She, doing auspicious acts, sold all domestic articles and performed the rites beneficial to the two in the next world. She, highly devoted to Viṣṇu, calm, truthful, pure and with her senses controlled, lived in that city only and sustained her life. From birth till death she properly observed two vows: the vow of Ekādaśī and the vow of (i.e. relating to) Kārtika. O dear one, this couple of vows is very dear to me. It properly brings about pleasures and salvation, and sons and wealth. Those, even being great sinners, who, in the month of Kārtika, when the Sun is in Libra, bathe everyday in the morning, are released. Those men who sweep their house and present (the auspicious sign of) svastika etc. to Viṣṇu and worship Viṣṇu, are liberated while alive. Those men who bathe, keep awake, offer lights, resort to the Tulasī-grove in Kārtika are the forms of Viṣṇu. Those who do like this even for three days in Kārtika, are venerable even to gods. What to say of them who have done it from birth!

15-30. In this way Guṇavatī, always devoted to Viṣṇu's followers, and having fixed her mind on him, passed every year.

O dear one, once she who was emaciated due to old age and was tormented by fever, slowly, somehow, went to Gaṅgā to bathe. When, after she got into the water, she trembled and was oppressed by cold and frightened, she saw an aeroplane that came from the sky. From the sky it approached with (beings) having Viṣṇu's form, having conches, discs and maces in their hands, and properly marked with banners having (the pictures of) eagles. She got into the aeroplane served by a bevy of celestial nymphs. The attendants took her being fanned by chowries, to Vaikuṇṭha. Then she, like the flame of a blazing fire, who was in the aeroplane, obtained my proximity due to the religious merit of the Kārtika vow. Then all the attendants went with me coming to the earth by the request of the deities like Brahmā. O beautiful young lady, all these Yādavas are my attendants only. Your father became (i.e. was born as) this king Satrājit. He who was Candraśarman (became) Akrūra, and you are that Guṇavatī, O auspicious one. Due to the merit of the Kārtika vow, you very much enhance my love. At my door you had formerly made this Tulasī grove. From that this desire-yielding tree has come up in your courtyard, O auspicious one. Since formerly in Kārtika you made illumination, therefore, this Lakṣmī living in your house, has become steady. Since you offered all that vow etc. to Viṣṇu of the from of your husband, therefore, you have become my wife. Due to that vow only which you formerly (i.e. in the former existence) observed in Kārtika, from birth till death, you will never be separated from me. Thus, those men who are highly engrossed in the Kārtika vow, also come near me, as you, causing delight to me (have come). Men performing sacrifices, giving gifts, observing vows, practising penance do not indeed get even a portion of the merit which one gets by the Kārtika vow.

Having thus, at that time, heard (the words) of the lord of the world, Satyā, delighted due to the grandeur produced in the former meritorious existence, saluted the lord of the universe, Kṛṣṇa, who was the only cause of the three worlds, and spoke (those) words.

CHAPTER NINETY

Kārtika Best among Months and Ekādaśī among Days

Satyā said:

1-2. To him of the nature of time, all the parts of time are equal. Then how is Kārtika the best among the months? O lord of the god of gods, how is it that to you Ekādaśī among days and Kārtika among months are dear? Tell (me) the reason for this.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

3-4. O Satyā, you have asked well. Listen with a concentrated mind a dialogue between Vena's son Pṛthu and the divine sage Nārada. What you have asked, O dear one, formerly Nārada was also asked by Pṛthu. The omniscient sage told the reason for the superiority of Kārtika.

Nārada said:

5-17. Formerly there was a demon, the son of the Ocean, named Śaṅkha. He was able to destroy the three worlds and had great power and valour. The great demon, having vanquished the gods, drove them out of heaven. He also snatched the powers of the regents like Indra. Due to his fear gods along with the ladies in their harems and with Indra went to the cave of the Meru mountain and lived there for many years. When the gods who lived in the cave of the Meru mountain, could not be subjugated by the demon, he thought: 'Even though the gods have been vanquished and their powers snatched by me, yet they are full of power. What should I do now? Today it is known (i.e. realised) by me that the gods are endowed with the power of the Vedic hymns. I shall snatch them. Then all of them will be powerless.' Then the mighty demon thinking like this and noticing Viṣṇu to be asleep, quickly snatched from the Satya world the group of the Vedas. He took the Vedas. Due to his fear they moved out, and with the sacrifice and hymns they entered the water (of the ocean). Śaṅkha also, looking for them and wandering in the interior of the ocean, did not notice them

anywhere seated at one place. Then Brahmā with the gods sought the shelter of Viṣṇu. Taking the materials of worship he went to Viṣṇu's house. There the gods performed acts like singing, playing upon musical instruments, and repeatedly (offered him) sandal, flowers, incense and lights. Then the lord devoutly pleased by them, got up. He, having the lustre of a thousand suns was seen there by all the gods. The gods then having worshipped him in sixteen ways fell (i.e. prostrated themselves) on the earth like a staff. Then Viṣṇu said to them:

Viṣṇu said:

18-31. O groups of gods, by means of the auspicious (acts) like singing and (playing upon) the musical instruments, I (am pleased and) will grant you boons. I shall give you all objects desired by your mind. From the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Āśvina till the Udbodhinī Ekādaśī men will daily do as you did with the auspicious (acts) like singing, (playing upon) musical instruments etc. They (will) do what is dear to me, and will ever remain in my vicinity. Since what you did—(offering) water for washing the feet, respectful oblation, and (offering) water for sipping,—has had wonderful effect, it has become the cause of your happiness. O gods, all the Vedas snatched by Śaṅkha remain in water. Having killed the Ocean's son, I shall bring them (back). May the Vedas with the basic hymns and sacrifice always rest in water from today in the month of Kārtika every year. From today I (shall) also remain in water. Along with the chief sages you may also come with me. There is no doubt that those best brāhmaṇas who during this period bathe (daily) in the morning, have well performed the ablution at the end of a sacrifice. O Indra, those men who everyday properly observe the vow in Kārtika, should be always brought by you to my house on their death. And by my order they are always to be protected from dangers. O Varuṇa, you should give them progeny—sons and grandsons etc. O Kubera, you have to increase their wealth by my order. Those men, liberated while alive, actually have my form. Those (men) who have from birth to death observed this best vow according to the rule laid down (in the holy texts), should also be honoured by you. Since you awoke me on the day of Ekādaśī, therefore, this day is always

venerable and gives me joy. This couple of vows, properly observed by men, always gives Kṛṣṇa's proximity. No other vow (does it). O best gods, gifts, (visits to) holy places, austerities, sacrifices, do not always give (i.e. lead to) heaven.

CHAPTER NINETYONE

The Greatness of Prayāga

Nārada said:

1-4a. Saying so, Viṣṇu taking up a form resembling a small glittering fish fell into the hollow of the hands of Kaśyapa at his residence on the Vindhya (mountain). The sage kindly and quickly put him into (his) water-pot. When it could not contain itself there, he put it into a well. When it could not contain itself there, he put it into a lake. In this way it was (in the end) put into the sea. It grew there also. Then Viṣṇu, having the form of the fish, killed Śaṅkha. Then taking him in his hand he came to the Badarī-forest. Calling all the sages there, he ordered them (like) this.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

4b-6. Remove the Vedas dropped into the water. Quickly bring them with the Upaniṣads from the interior of the water. Till then I, with the group of deities, shall live at Prayāga.

Nārada said:

7-11. Then all the sages, endowed with the power of penance, lifted the Vedas with the six Vedāṅgas and with sacrifices. Since then that sage who got a portion of them (i.e. the Vedas) became the seer of that (much portion), O king. Then all the sages together went to Prayāga. They presented the Vedas obtained by them to Viṣṇu with the Creator. Brahmā, obtaining the Vedas with the sacrifices was delighted; and with the group of deities and sages he performed the horse-sacrifice. At the end of the sacrifice lords of gods, siddhas, serpents,

yakṣas fell (i.e. prostrated themselves) like a staff, and requested (Viṣṇu).

Gods said:

12-15. O god of gods, O lord of the world, O master, listen to our request. This is time for our joy. Therefore, be a giver of a boon. O Ramā's lord, the sages themselves have brought to this place the lost Vedas. Due to your favour we have received shares in the sacrifice. May this place always be, by your grace, the best one on the earth. It should increase religious merit and give pleasures and salvation. May this time also be highly meritorious, and may it purify the killers etc. of brāhmaṇas. May it give inexhaustible (objects). Grant us this boon.

Śrīkṛṣṇa said:

16-28. O gods, I think in the same way as you have said. Let it be so. May this (place) be famous as *Brahmakṣetra.* A king born in the solar dynasty will bring Gaṅgā here. She will be here united with Yamunā, the daughter of the Sun. All of you, Brahmā and others, (should) live here with me. This holy place will be well-known as *Tīrtha-rāja* ('king of holy places'). May acts like (giving) gifts, (practising) penance, (observing) vows, (offering) a sacrifice, muttering (hymns), and worship give inexhaustible fruits. May they always give proximity with me. May sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa committed during many existences perish the very moment at the sight of this holy place. Similarly the wise cast their bodies in my vicinity. Those men enter my body only and not a new existence. May the groups of the dead ancestors of those who come here and offer a śrāddha intended for the dead ancestors, have the same world as mine. May this very auspicious period also be always fruitful to men. The sin of those who bathe (here) when the Sun has entered Capricornus, perishes. Merely on seeing those who bathe (daily) in the morning in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus, sins go away, as darkness on (the appearance of) the Sun. As a result of the (daily) bath in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus, I grant men the triad, viz. the same world, the same form (as mine), and proximity (with me) in this order. O best sages, listen all of you. I am the giver of boons to you. I,

the omniscient one, always live in Badarīvana. That fruit which you get after ten years by (practising) penance at other place, is always got here by you within a day. Those best men who see that place, are liberated while alive. Then no sin resides in them.

Sūta said:

29-30. Having spoken like this to the gods, the god of gods vanished there only with Brahmā. All gods also lived there in portions. And those (gods), Indra and others, vanished. That best man of a pure heart who would listen to this religious verse or make others listen to it (i.e. tell it to others), would obtain the fruit which is obtained in the lord of holy places, Badarīvana, and (would) also (obtain) me[1].

CHAPTER NINETYTWO

Rules for the Vow of Kārtika

Pṛthu said:

1. O sage, you told me the great fruit of the vows of Kārtika and Māgha. O Nārada, you also (told me) properly about the rite of bathing and about the restraints. (Now) please tell me in due order the bringing to completion (of that rite).

Nārada said:

2-15. You are born from a portion of Viṣṇu. (Therefore) nothing is unknown to you. Yet, O son of Vena, listen properly to the importance from me who am telling it. A man, being careful, should observe the rule about the vow of Kārtika, when it would be the Ekādaśī of the bright half of the month of Āśvina. When a quarter of the night is left, he, the observer of the vow, with a vessel containing water should go out of his house in the south-west direction. By the day and in the evening

1. 'Me' here standing for Sūta obviously has no relevance.

after having placed his sacred thread on his ear, after having covered the ground with grass, after having covered his head with a garment, having carefully controlled his mouth, without spitting or panting, he should pass urine or feces after facing the north. If it is night he should face the south. Having held his organ of generation he should get up. Taking pure clay, he should carefully make purification (i.e. wash) by which the smearing and odour will vanish. He should apply (clay) to his organ of generation once, to the anus five times, to the left hand ten times, to both the hands seven times, and to the feet thrice (and then wash them with water). Twice this (number) is told for a celibate, and thrice for a hermit, four times for an ascetic. Half (the number should be used for) purification at night. Half of it (should be employed when he is) travelling. Half of it is (recommended) for women and śūdras. All the acts of him who does not go through the act of purification, are useless. The hymns of one not having his mouth pure, are said not to give the (desired) fruit. After that he should carefully cleanse his teeth and tongue, 'O tree, give us (long) life, power, success, vigour, progeny, animals and wealth.' Uttering this hymn, (he should take a piece of) wood of the length of twelve fingers of the kṣīra tree[1] without fasting on the diminutive day (*obscure*) (and he should cleanse his teeth). He should not cleanse his teeth on the first day, the new-moon day, the ninth day, the sixth day, a Sunday and at the time of the lunar or solar eclipse. He should avoid cleansing his teeth with (a stick of) the kaṇṭakī tree, cotton tree, nirguṇḍa tree, palāśa tree, bilva tree, castor oil plant, and iṅgudī tree.

16-30. Then he, with a pleased mind and devoted, should go, taking with him sandal, flowers, good tāmbūlas to the temple of Viṣṇu and Śiva. Then having separately offered articles (and modes) of worship like water for washing the feet, respectful oblation etc., and bowed again, he should do auspicious things like singing. He should also honour the good dancers having musical instruments made of bell-metal, lutes, tabors etc., so also he should honour the singers with fragrant flowers and

---

1. Kṣīravṛkṣa—Name of the four trees, viz. Nyagrodha, Udumbara, Aśvattha and Madhūka.

tāmbūlas, since they are the forms of Viṣṇu. In the Kali age penance, sacrifice, gifts made with devotion to the good lord of the world, always give delight. O king, I asked, "O lord of gods, where do you live?" Viṣṇu, pleased with my devotion then spoke to me thus: "I do not live in Vaikuṇṭha, nor in the heart of the yogins. O Nārada, I stay there where my devotees sing (my praise). Those foolish men who, after hearing a good narrative from a Purāṇa or the singing of my devotees, do not long for me, are hated by me. Men (should) worship them (devotees) with sandal, flowers etc. By that I am so much pleased as I am not pleased with my worship," Viṣṇu should not be worshipped with the flowers of śirīṣa, dhattura, hill-plantain, jasmine, śālmali, sun-plant, karṇikāra and with sacred rice grains. So also Śiva should not be worshipped with the flowers of japā, kunda, śirīṣa, jasmine, white jasmine, ketakī. One should not worship Gaṇeśa with Tulasī-leaves and Pārvatī with dūrvās. A man desiring wealth should not, in the same way, worship the Sun with damanaka flowers. Always he should use fragrant and best flowers for worship. Having thus offered the worship, he should apologise to the god of gods: 'O lord of gods, may whatever I have offered as worship without hymns, rites and without devotion, be complete. Then having gone round (the deity by keeping the deity) to his right, he should salute (i.e. prostrate himself) like a staff. He should again apologise to the deity and the singers etc. Those men who, on a night in Kārtika, properly worship Viṣṇu or Śiva, have their sins completely destroyed, and their ancestors go to Viṣṇu's abode.

CHAPTER NINETYTHREE

The Bath Rite

Nārada said:

1-10. When the night is left as much as two nāḍikās (i.e. fortyeight minutes), he, being pure (i.e. having purified himself),

should (taking) with (him) sesamum-seeds, sandal, sacred rice grains, flowers, lights etc., go to a pond. The bath in an artificial pond, a natural pond, in a river or at a confluence of two rivers, is said to be giving tenfold merit in (the succeeding) order. (A bath taken) at a holy place is said to give unending fruit. Having remembered Viṣṇu, he should take the solemn vow of bathing. He should offer respectful oblations to the holy places, deities etc. in (proper) order. (He should say): "Om, salutation to Kamalanābha. Salutation to him lying in water. Accept (this) respectful offering. Salutation to you. Since Viṣṇu moved in Vaikuṇṭha, Prayāga and Badarikāśrama, he planted his foot in three ways. With all those sages and deities, may gods protect me for this reason that from here Viṣṇu moved on. In Kārtika, to please (you), O best god, Dāmodara, lord of the god of gods, I shall bathe in the morning (everyday). (Be) with me. O lord of gods, O Dāmodara, I am eager to bathe in this water after having reflected on you. May my sin perish due to your grace. O Hari, with Rādhā accept the respectful offering made by me at (the time of) an obligatory or occasional (rite) in the sin-destroying Kārtika in the Kali age. O Hari, with Rādhā accept the respectful offering given by me who observe a vow in the month of Kārtika, of me who have bathed duly."

11-19. After having remembered Gaṅgā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, the Sun, he should enter the water. He who observes the vow, should, standing in water deep up to the navel, bathe duly. A householder should bathe with (i.e. after applying) the powder of sesamum-seeds and āmalaka. For the hermits and ascetics the clay at the root of Tulasī (is recommended). He should not bathe with (i.e. after applying) āmalaka fruits and sesamum-seeds on the seventh, the new-moon day, the ninth of both (fortnights) and on the tenth day. First he should bathe with dust (i.e. applying clay etc.). Then he should bathe with the (recital of) hymns. For women and śūdras (the bath is) not (recommended) with (the recital of) Vedic hymns, (but only) with the Purāṇic ones. (Now follow) the hymns at the time of bathing: "May Viṣṇu, the destroyer of all sins, who formerly for the mission of the gods divided himself into three due to devotion for them, now protect me compassionately. For this Kārtika vow may all gods having

received Viṣṇu's order, always protect and purify me. May all the Vedic hymns along with their seeds, secrets and power, so also sages like Kaśyapa, always purify me. May all rivers like Gaṅgā, the big rivers giving water, all tanks with the seven seas, purify me. May chaste women like Aditi, yakṣas, siddhas with serpents, herbs, mountains, beings in the three worlds quickly purify me."

20-32. Having bathed with (the recital of) these hymns, the observer of the vow, putting a ring of kuśa grass on (the fourth finger of) his hand, should properly offer libations of water to gods, sages, human beings and (his) dead ancestors. Then the observer of the vow, having come out of the water and having covered himself with a pure garment, should, after having finished rites proper for the morning, again worship Viṣṇu. Being diligent and with his mind fixed on him (i.e. Viṣṇu), he should, after remembering the holy places etc. and deities, again offer worship with sandal, flowers and fruits. The prayer at (the time of making) the respectful offering is: "O destroyer of the lord of demons, accept the respectful oblation given by me—(oblation) of me who have properly bathed (in the morning) in the month of Kārtika." Then devoutly (honouring) the brāhmaṇas who have mastered the Vedas with sandal, flowers and fruits, he should feed them and salute them again and again. By worshipping the brāhmaṇas, the holy places residing in the right foot, the Vedas residing in the mouth, and the deities residing in the entire body, would be worshipped. The brāhmaṇas are the forms of the unmanifest Viṣṇu on the earth. By one desiring (one's) good they should never be humiliated; they should never be opposed. The observer of the vow should worship Tulasī, dear to Viṣṇu. With a concentrated mind he should go round and salute Tulasī. "O Tulasī, you have been formerly created by gods. You have been worshipped by the best sages. Salutation, obeisance to you, O Tulasī. O you dear to Viṣṇu, remove my sin." Then the devout observer of the vow, of an affectionate mind, should listen to Viṣṇu's account (as told) in the Purāṇa, and should honour that brāhmaṇa, the brāhmaṇa sage (who reads or tells the account). A devout man who properly performs the complete rite which is told before, obtains the same world as of Viṣṇu. On the earth

there is no vow other than that of Kārtika and dear to Viṣṇu, which removes diseases, which destroys sins, which is great, which gives good thoughts, which is the means of sons, wealth etc., and which is the cause of salvation.

CHAPTER NINETYFOUR

Restraints during the Kārtika Vow

Nārada said:

1-17. O king, listen fully to the restraints told for men observing the Kārtika vow, which (will) be told by me. The observer of the Kārtika vow should not at all eat any kind of flesh and meat, honey, jujube fruit and beans etc. The observer of the Kārtika vow should avoid corn (whose seeds have) two portions, sesamum oil, so also food polluted by tears, polluted by (bad) thoughts, polluted by (bad) words. The observer of the Kārtika vow should not accept others' food, should not hate others, should not be an adulterer, should not accept gifts at a holy place. He who observes the vow in Kārtika should avoid the censure of the god of gods, brāhmaṇas, (his) preceptor, (another man) observing the vow, of women, kings, and great (men). The limb of an animal, meat, powder, jambīra among the fruits, flesh, masūrikā (a kind of pulse) among corns, and stale food, are said to be avoided. So also milk etc. other than that of a goat, a cow, a buffalo, āmiṣa, all liquids purchased by a brāhmaṇa, and rock salt. Gavya (i.e. milk, curds etc.) kept in a copper-vessel, water collected in a small pool, and food cooked for oneself is said to be 'āmiṣa' by the wise. The observer of the (Kārtika) vow should observe celibacy, should sleep on the ground, should eat from a plate made of leaves. He should eat during the fourth part of the day. He should always do this. On the Naraka Caturdaśī day the observer of the Kārtika vow should smear his body with oil. He should not smear his body with oil on any other day (than the Naraka Caturdaśī day). The observer of the Kārtika vow should

avoid onions, garlic, pot-herb, mushroom, small red variety of garlic, lotus-stalk, radish, so also asafoetida. The observer of the vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu should avoid bottle-gourd, egg-plant, pumpkin-gourd, and the fruit (of the plant) of bṛhatī, so also śleṣmātaka fruit and wood-apple. The observer of the Kārtika vow should not talk with a woman in her menses, a man of the lowest caste, a non-Aryan, a fallen person, an out-cast, and those out of the fold of the Vedas and the (three) twice-born castes. The observer of the Kārtika vow should avoid the food seen by dogs and crows, food prepared by a woman who has recently delivered, and food cooked twice, and burnt food. He who avoids smearing his body with oil, (sleeping on) a bed, others' food, eating from a bell-metal vessel in Kārtika, would be one who fully observes the vow. The observer of thevowshould also observe the Kṛcchra vowetc. according to his capacity. (From the first day) he should avoid in order pumpkin gourd, egg-plant, root of bṛhatī, bilva-fruit, kaliṅga fruit, dhātrī, coconut, large-sized bottle-gourd, (species of cucumber called) paṭola, badarī fruit, bhūrja-fruit, vikataka-fruit, lotus-stalk and vikaṭa-fruit.

18-28. From the first day (onwards) these vegetables are to be avoided in the order (given here). Similarly, a householder should always avoid (eating) dhātri-fruit on Sunday. From among these also the man should avoid what pleases Viṣṇu. Having given that to a brāhmaṇa, the man should always eat. In the same way the observer of the vow should have restraints in Māgha also. He should keep awake and observe the rite as is told. Seeing the man observing the Kārtika vow as told (in the holy texts), Yama's messengers run away like elephants tormented by a lion. This vow (in honour) of Viṣṇu is superior to a hundred sacrifices. The performer of a sacrifice goes to heaven; the observer of the Kārtika vow goes to Vaikuṇṭha. All the holy places giving enjoyments and salvation, that are there on the earth, remain in the house of the observer of the Kārtika-vow. A bad dream, or whatever bad deed is done through mind, speech and body, goes away that moment only on seeing the observer of the Kārtika vow. Like the servants of a king, Indra and others urged by Viṣṇu's words protect the man who observes the Kārtika vow. Imps, ghosts, goblins etc. do not

remain there where the observers of the Viṣṇu vow are always honoured. Even Brahmā, with his four mouths, would not be able to describe the religious merit of him who observes the Kārtika vow as told (in the holy texts). (If) a man observes, along with restraints, the vow in Kārtika, which is dear to Viṣṇu, which destroys all sins, which gives sons, wealth, grains and prosperity everywhere, (then) what is the use of visiting and paying homage to sacred places for him?

CHAPTER NINETYFIVE

Bringing the Vow to Conclusion

Nārada said:

1-9. O king, now listen properly to the rite of bringing to conclusion—what the rite is—being told by me in brief. The observer of the vow should bring to conclusion the vow on the fourteenth of Kārtika for pleasing Viṣṇu. Above the Tulasī he should put up an auspicious pavilion with a good arched doorway and beautified with flowers and chowries. At the doors he should separately honour the door-keepers. He (should have) Jaya and Vijaya, meritorious and of good character. At the root of the Tulasī he should draw (an) auspicious (circle) all around. It should be properly beautified and ornamented with four colours. Above it should be a covering (decked) with five jewels. Having placed there a pitcher with a big fruit, he should worship there the god of gods holding a conch, a disc, a mace, having put on a silken yellow garment and with Lakṣmī. The observer of the vow should also honour in the circle the regents of quarters like Indra, since he was awakened by the gods on Dvādaśī along with Trayodaśī. He was seen to be honoured on the fourteenth. Therefore, he is more venerable. A man, calm and of a restrained mind, should devoutly fast on that day.

10-24. With his preceptor's consent he should worship the golden (image of) the lord of the god of gods in sixteen ways of worship with several eatables. By means of auspicious (acts

like) singing and (playing upon) musical instruments, he should keep awake at night. Those who on (the night of) keeping awake in honour of the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu), sing devoutly, are free from heaps of sins due to hundreds of existences. That fruit (which is obtained) by those keeping awake on the day of Viṣṇu, and singing and dancing, is said to be the fruit of those who give a thousand cows. He should sing, dance etc. and should present spectacles. Of him who keeps awake on the night of keeping awake for Viṣṇu, in front of Viṣṇu, he who amuses Viṣṇu's devotees by reciting Viṣṇu's accounts, who produces the sounds of musical instruments with his mouth, and who presents free talks, who with these dispositions keeps awake in honour of Viṣṇu, his religious merit everyday is said to be equal to (a visit to) crores of holy places. Then on the full-moon day he should invite thirty or more brāhmaṇas with their wives according to his capacity. Since having given boons Viṣṇu took up the form of fish, therefore, whatever is given, offered into fire or muttered is said to be of an inexhaustible fruit. Therefore, the observerer of the vow should feed those brāhmaṇas with sweetened milk etc. He should (saying) *Ato deva*, offer sesamum-seeds and sweetened milk to two separately for pleasing the god of gods and deities. Having then worshipped the god (Viṣṇu), Tulasī and (other) deities, he should give them presents according to his capacity and salute them. Then the observer of the vow should duly worship there a tawny cow. Having honoured his preceptor instructing him in the vow with garments, ornaments etc. and having honoured him with his wife, he should give the cow to him. 'Due to your grace may the lord of gods be always pleased with me. May all that sin committed by me during seven existences, perish due to this vow, and may my progeny be stable. Due to the worship may my desires be always fruitful. On death may I obtain Viṣṇu's position very difficult to be secured.'

25-31 Having thus apologised to and pleased the brāhmaṇas, he should dismiss them. Then the observer of the vow should give (the materials of) the worship with the jewels to his preceptor. Then the devoted one should eat with his friends and elders. The rite is said to be like this in Kārtika or Māgha. A man who thus duly observes the Kārtika vow, is free from

sins, and getting release he would go into Viṣṇu's proximity. The fruit due to the proper observance of this vow should be known to be a crore times more than that of all vows, (visits to) all holy places and all gifts. Those who are engrossed in devotion to Viṣṇu and who observe the Kārtika vow are lucky and very meritorious, and get all the fruits. Sins remaining in his body have deliberation through fear of him. They say, 'If this man observes this vow, where shall we go?' Those devotees who in this way listen to the restraints, and those who narrate them before Viṣṇu's devotees, would obtain the fruit due to their having properly observed the vow, and have all their sins destroyed.

CHAPTER NINETYSIX

The Birth of Jalandhara

Pṛthu said:

1-3. O brāhmaṇa, (after listening to) the vow of Kārtika that you told in detail, and the worship of Viṣṇu at the Tulasī root that you told, I desire to ask about the greatness of Tulasī. How is she so very dear to the god of gods, Viṣṇu, Śārṅgin? How and at what place has she sprung up, O Nārada? (Please) tell this in brief. I look upon you as omniscient.

Nārada said:

4-11. Formerly when Rudra hurled down the Ocean's son, the lord of demons, gods like Brahmā bowed to Rudra with their heads (bent). O king, listen. I shall tell you the greatness of Tulasī. I shall tell you all the old account with its history. Formerly, Indra surrounded by all deities and waited upon by celestial nymphs, went to Kailāsa mountain, to see Śiva. When he went to Śiva's house, he quickly saw there a man of fearful deeds and fierce due to his fangs and eyes. He asked him: "O, who are you? Where has the lord of the world gone?" When asked repeatedly like this, he did not speak. O king, Indra got

angry, reproached him, and said (these) words, "O, though asked by me you have not given a reply. Therefore, I shall kill you with the thunderbolt. O you wicked one, who is your protector here?" Speaking like this, then Indra struck him hard with his thunderbolt. Due to that (stroke) his throat became dark blue and the thunderbolt was reduced to ash. Then Rudra blazed, as it were burning with lustre. Seeing (this), Bṛahaspati quickly joined the palms of his hands. And Indra prostrating like a staff on the ground started praising (him).

Bṛhaspati said:

12-14. Obeisance to Devādhideva (i.e. god of gods), to Tryambaka (i.e. having three eyes), to Kapardin (i.e. having braided and matted hair), to Tripuraghna (i.e. the destroyer of Tripura), to Śarva; salutation to the killer of Andhaka. Salutation to Virūpa (i.e. the deformed one), to Atirūpa (i.e. having a superior form), to Bahurūpa (i.e. the multi-formed one), to Śambhu, to the destroyer, and the giver of the fruit of the sacrifices. (Salutation) to the destroyer of Death, to Kāla (i.e. Death), to him, having a deadly snake; salutation to him who destroyed Brahmā's head; repeated salutations to the brāhmaṇa.

Nārada said:

15-16. Thus praised, Śiva, withdrawing the flame capable of burning the three worlds, said to the best brāhmaṇa (i.e. (Bṛhaspati): "O brāhmaṇa, ask for a boon. I am pleased with this praise of (i.e. done by) you. Be famous as (i.e. by the name) 'Jīva' as you gave back (i.e. saved) Indra's life."

Bṛhaspati said:

17. If, O god, you are pleased, (then) go to Indra who has sought your refuge. May this fire, risen from the (third) eye on your forhead be quelled.

The lord said:

18. How can this (fire) enter the eye on the forehead? I shall cast it (far) away so that it would not trouble Indra.

Nārada said:

19-24a. Saying so, and holding it in his hand, he threw it into the salt Ocean. It fell at the confluence of the river Gaṅgā and the Ocean. Then it got a child's form and wept. Due to the sound of its weeping the earth repeatedly trembled. Heaven and Satyaloka became deafened due to that sound. Hearing it, and being very much wonderstruck, Brahmā went there (saying): 'What is this?' Just then he saw the child on the lap of the Ocean. Seeing Brahmā coming, the Ocean too, joined the palms of his hands, and bowing to him with his head (bent) put the boy on his lap. Then Brahmā said (these) words: "Whose wonderful child is this?" Hearing (these) words of Brahmā, the Ocean said (these) words.

Brahmā said:

24b-25a. O you lord of the rivers, wherefrom did you get this very strong boy, by whose sound gods, demons and great serpents are frightened?

The Ocean said:

25b-27. O Brahman, this is my boy born on the river Gaṅgā. O lord of the world, perform for him the ceremonies (performed) at the birth of a child etc.

Ocean's son seized Brahmā's beard, and repeatedly shook it. From the eyes of him whose beard was (thus being) shaken, tears came (out). Somehow getting his beard freed, Brahmā said to the Ocean.

Brahmā said:

28-30. Since he held these tears from my eyes, therefore, he will be famous by the name 'Jalandhara'. Now only he will be a youth, master of all weapons and sacred books and will not be killed by any being except Rudra; and he will go where a born one goes.

Nārada said:

31-33. Speaking like this and calling Śukra he consecrated

him on the throne. Taking leave of the lord of rivers, Brahmā vanished (from there). Then, the Ocean, with his eyes blooming with joy on seeing him, solicited Kālanemi's daughter Vṛndā for (being) his wife. Those demons, led by Kālanemi, were glad and gave that daughter to him (i.e. to Jalandhara). He, the mighty and powerful one, aided by Śukra, getting them as best friends, ruled over the earth.

CHAPTER NINETYSEVEN

The Conquest of Amarāvatī by Jalandhara

Nārada said:

1-6a. Those demons living in the nether world and formerly vanquished by gods, became fearless and came to the earth to serve him. Some time seeing Rāhu with his head cut off, the lord of the demons asked the brāhmaṇa, viz. Śukra: "O lord, who has done this?" Bhārgava told him (the account of) the cutting off of Rāhu's head and the churning of the ocean for nectar done by gods. So also the snatching of the jewels and the defeat of the demons. Hearing about that churning of his father, his eyes were red with anger. He sent a gluttonous messenger to Indra. The messenger, going to heaven, quickly reached the assembly of gods, (and) with his head not bent due to pride, said to the lord of gods.

The messenger said:

6b-8. The Ocean's son Jalandhara is the lord of all demons. I am the messenger sent by him. Listen to what he has said: "Why did you churn my father with a mountain? Give back quickly to me all those jewels taken (by you)."

Hearing these words of the messenger, the lord of the gods was amazed. And with fear and anger he spoke to the fearful, voracious (messenger):

The lord said:

9-12. Listen, O messenger, since the mountains afraid of me were put by him to his side, I formerly churned the Ocean. He also protected my other enemies, the sons of Diti. Therefore, I took away all that collection of the jewels. Formerly Śaṅkha, the Ocean's son, hated gods. He too, struck by my younger brother (i.e. Viṣṇu), entered the interior of the Ocean. So go and tell him fully the reason of the churning (of the Ocean).

Nārada said:

13-23. The messenger, thus dismissed by Indra, came home. He then told the words (i.e. the message) of Indra to his king. Hearing it, the demon, with his lips quivering with anger, quickly exerted (himself) with a desire to conquer the gods. In that exertion of (conquering) Indra, the sons of Diti came in hundreds and crores from the directions and the nether world. The demon (Jalandhara) with crores of generals of the army like Śumbha and Niśumbha, went to heaven and stood for the war. Gods, furnished with armours for the war, went out of Amarāvatī. Seeing the demon-army, they stood surrounding the city. Then the war between the armies of gods and demons took place with (the use of) pestles, iron clubs, arrows, maces, axes and (the weapons called) śakti. Rushing to one another, they struck one another. In a moment the two armies were wet with the stream of blood. The battlefield appeared like the evening with the cover of clouds, due to the elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers that had fallen and that were being knocked down. Bhārgava brought back to life the demons killed in that war with drops of water consecrated with the magic formulas bringing back the dead to life. In the same way Bṛhaspati also brought the gods back to life in that war after repeatedly bringing the herbs from the region of Droṇa (mountain). Seeing gods again coming back to life in that war Jalandhara, being angry, said (these) words to Bhārgava:

Jalandhara said:

24. How is it that the gods killed by me in the war again come back to life? It is well-known that your science of bringing back (the dead) to life does not reside anywhere else (i.e. is not known to anyone else).

Bhṛgu said:

25. Bṛhaspati, bringing herbs from the Droṇa mountain, brings back the gods to life. Quickly snatch away the Droṇa mountain.

Nārada said:

26-33. The lord of the demons, thus told, quickly took the Droṇa mountain and threw it into the ocean and again came back to the great battle(field). Then seeing the gods killed, Guru went to the Droṇa mountain. He, honoured by the gods, did not see the lordly mountain there. Knowing that Droṇa was snatched by the demon, he was sad and overcome by fear. He with his body overcome by breathlessness (i.e. panting), spoke from a distance: "Flee, flee; he cannot be conquered. He is born of the portion of Rudra. Remember Indra's act." Hearing his words, gods, overpowered by fear and being killed by the demons, ran in the ten directions. Seeing the gods rent, the demon, the Ocean's son, entered Amarāvatī with the sounds of conches, drums and shouts of victory. When the demon entered the city, gods led by Indra and tormented by the demons, reached a cave in Meru and lived there. Then having separately made the excellent demons like Śumbha in-charge of Indra etc. he (i.e. Jalandhara) again went to the cave on the golden mountain (i.e. Meru).

CHAPTER NINETYEIGHT

Viṣṇu Promises not to Kill Ja landhara

Nārada said:

1. Seeing the demon to have come again, gods with Indra trembled with fear and started praising Viṣṇu.

Gods said:

2-4. Obeisance to you who are always ready for (serving) the purpose of the devotee by (taking) many forms like that of the

Fish or the Tortoise; (to you) who remove affliction, who are the author of the Creator etc., the creation, maintenance and destruction (of the world); who have in your hands a mace, a conch, a lotus etc. We bow to you, lord of Ramā (i.e. Lakṣmī), the killer of the demons, the lord of the first among the serpents (i.e. Śeṣa), (to you) wearing a yellow garment, maturing the rites like a sacrifice etc., the great author (of everything), fit to be resorted to. Salutation to that Viṣṇu, the thunderbolt of Indra for destroying the mountain of the grief of the gods tormented by the demons, (to Viṣṇu) lying on the bed of the lord of serpents, having two eyes in the form of the Sun and the Moon. We salute him.

Nārada said:

5-7. He who would everyday recite (this) hymn, destroying calamities, is never troubled by calamities due to Viṣṇu's grace. When the gods thus praised (Viṣṇu) the enemy of the demons, Viṣṇu came to know about the calamity of the gods. The enemy of the demons, getting up quickly with his mind dejected through pity, quickly mounted upon Garuḍa, and said (these) words to Lakṣmī.

Viṣṇu said:

8. Your brother Jalandhara has played havoc among the gods. Invited by them, I shall quickly go to fight.

Lakṣmī said:

9. O you treasure of compassion, O my lord, if I am always dear to you and your devotee, then how should my brother be killed by you in a battle?

The lord said:

10. Due to his being born from a portion of Rudra, due to Brahmā's statement (about him), and due to your love (for him), Jalandhara shall never be killed by me.

Nārada said:

11-19. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu holding a conch, a disc, a mace and a sword, mounted upon Garuḍa, and went there

where the gods were praising him. The demons tormented by the wind (produced) by the very strong wings of (Garuḍa) whose younger brother is Aruṇa wandered like the clouds in the sky turned round by a storm. Then Jalandhara, seeing the demons tormented, did not utter a word, (but) angrily came to Viṣṇu. Then a great fight took place between Viṣṇu and the lord of demons, making the sky having no room in it with their arrows. With volleys of arrows Viṣṇu cut off the demon's banner, umbrella, bow and horses and struck him on his chest with one arrow. Then the demon having a mace in his hand, jumped quickly, struck Garuḍa on his head and knocked him down on the ground. Viṣṇu laughed and cut off the mace with his sword. (Just) then he struck on Viṣṇu's strong heart (chest) with his strong fist. Then the two very strong ones had a hand-to-hand fight, resounding the earth with their arms, fists, and knees. Having thus fought for a very long time, the brave Viṣṇu spoke with a deep-sounding voice to the king of the demons.

Viṣṇu said:

20. O lord of demons, ask for a boon. Due to your valour I am pleased with you. I shall even give you what cannot be given—(ask for) whatever is in your mind.

Jalandhara said:

21. O brother-in-law, if you are pleased with me, then grant me this boon—with that my sister (Lakṣmī) and with your attendants, you stay in my house.

Nārada said:

22-29. Saying "Let it be so", the lord with all his divine attendants went with Lakṣmī to the city named Jalandhara. Jalandhara also putting the gods in the custody of the demons, gladly again came back to the earth. The Ocean's son brought under his control whatever jewels belonged to the gods, gandharvas and siddhas. The strong one having placed the very strong Niśumbha in the Pātāla-abode took Śeṣa and others to the earth. Making the multitudes of gods, gandharvas, siddhas, yakṣas, demons and human beings the residents of his city, he ruled over the three worlds. Having thus subjugated the gods he righteo-

usly looked after his subjects like his own sons. When he was (thus) ruling righteously, no one was sick, no one was afflicted; similarly no one was weak, no one appeared helpless. When thus the lord of demons was righteously and properly ruling over the earth, some time, by chance, I went (to that city) to see his prosperity and to serve (Viṣṇu), Lakṣmī's husband.

CHAPTER NINETYNINE

Rāhu Acts as Messenger of Jalandhara

Nārada said:

1. O best king, that lord of demons having duly and very devoutly honoured me, laughed and said (these) words.

Jalandhara said:

2. O sage, tell me why have you come here, O brāhmaṇa; so also what you have seen and where, and why you have come here.

Nārada said:

3-16. O lord of demons, I had, by chance, gone to the peak of Kailāsa (mountain). There I met Śiva seated with Umā in the great forest of desire-yielding trees extended over a myriad of yojanas, crowded with hundreds of desire-yielding cows, and well-lit with the desire-yielding gem. Seeing the great wonder a thought then arose in my mind. Such abundance may or may not be anywhere in the three worlds. O lord of demons, great opulence is collected by you. With a desire to see that I have come here to you. Seeing this prosperity, except the jewels in the form of women of you, I certainly think that there is none else (as) rich as Śiva. Though celestial damsels and nāga damsels are under your control, yet they are not certainly like Pārvatī in beauty, in whose ocean of beauty formerly Brahmā got murged and lost his fortitude. Who else can be compared with her? Formerly by her in the form of a bhilla woman was subjugated

by means of penance (Śiva) who was without any attachment, who was Madana's enemy, on whom the universe depends at his pleasure, (but) who wandered in the forest of her beauty. On repeatedly seeing her form at the time of creation, the Creator created the celestial nymphs. (But) no one resembled her. Therefore, she, the best one, is the prosperity of him, the enjoyer of the gems of women. O you lord of demons, you, the lord of all gems, (do) not (have a gem) like that.

When, having talked like this, I took his leave and left, the lord of the demons had his body tormented with the 'fever' of love on hearing about her beauty. Then he sent Siṁhikā's son (Rāhu) as his messenger to Śiva. Then being deluded a little by Viṣṇu's Māyā (illusory power) Rāhu went to Kailāsa, having the lustre of the moon in the bright half. But he obtained the lustre of the moon in the dark half through the totality of (the lustre) from his body (i.e. he fully resembled the moon in the dark half of the month). Śiva was informed (of his arrival), and by his order he was taken in by Nandin. Urged by the indication of the creeper-like brow (of Śiva), he said (these) words.

Rāhu said:

17-19. O bull-bannered god, listen to the command of the lord served by serpents, master of the three worlds, master of all gems. "How can you, the naked one living in the cremation ground, wearing a string of heads, have this charming wife, the daughter of the Himālaya Mountain? I am the lord of jewels; and she is called a gem among women. Therefore, she is proper for me and not for you eating (i.e. subsisting on) alms."

Nārada said:

20-26. When, at that time Rāhu was speaking like this, a fierce man, with a voice like that of the violent thunderbolt was produced from the space between the eye-brows of Śiva. His face was like that of a lion; his tongue was moving; his eyes were fiery; he was great; his hair was erect; his body was dry; he was, as it were, another Nṛsiṁha. He set about to eat him. Seeing him Rāhu overcome by fear, speedily ran out; but he

seized him (i.e. Rāhu). Then that Rāhu of big arms said to the lord of the god of gods with a grave voice like (the sound of) the clouds: "Protect me who have sought your refuge. He has come to eat me, a brāhmaṇa, O Mahādeva. O you, who love those that seek your refuge, protect me from him." Hearing the words of that brāhmaṇa, Mahādeva then said: "He should not be killed, since, being a messenger, he is dependent upon another. Leave him" The man hearing these words, left Rāhu in the sky. Leaving Rāhu the man respectfully said to Mahādeva.

The man said:

27. O master, hunger oppresses me. I am fully emaciated with hunger. O lord, order what I should eat.

The lord said:

28a. Quickly eat the flesh of your hands and feet.

Nārada said:

28b-30. When the man thus ordered by Śiva ate up the flesh of his hands and feet, and when he remained with the head only, Śiva, seeing him with the head left, was very much pleased, and with amazement said to that man of fierce acts:

The lord said:

31. Having the name of 'Kīrtimukha' always remain at my door. Those who do not honour you, do not do what is dear to me.

Nārada said:

32-34. Since then Kīrtimukha remains at the door of the lord. The worship of those who do not honour him would be in vain. That Rāhu who was left by him fell on the Barbara region. Therefore, on the earth he is known as *Barbarodbhūta* Then Rāhu, thinking that he was reborn here, told all this done by Śiva to Jalandhara after approaching him.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED

Śiva's Attendants Fight the Demons off

Nārada said:

1-4. Hearing that Jalandhara with his body overcome by anger went out surrounded by crores of (soldiers in the) army of the demons. Śukra went before him. Rāhu remained within (the range of) his sight. His crown quickly slipped and fell on the ground. The entire sky shone with hundreds of aeroplanes occupied by the army of the demons as with clouds in the rainy season. Then seeing his exertion, gods led by Indra and with their hurry unnoticed, respectfully said to Śiva:

The gods said:

5. O master, how do you not know that the gods are respectfully speaking to you. For our protection kill the Ocean's son.

Nārada said:

6. Hearing these words of the gods Śiva laughed and calling the great Viṣṇu said these words to him:

The lord said:

7. O Viṣṇu, how (i.e. why) did you not kill Jalandhara in the battle? Afraid of him, you left your Vaikuṇṭha and went away.

Lord (Viṣṇu) said:

8. In the battle I did not kill the demon, since he was born from your portion, and since he is also Lakṣmī's brother. (Now) you (please) kill that demon.

The lord said:

9. He, of a great lustre, cannot be killed by me with these weapons and missiles. All the gods should give me a portion of their lustre.

Nārada said:

10-17a. Then gods, led by Viṣṇu, gave their own lustres.

The lord saw a great lustre (formed) by their coming together suddenly. Mahādeva fashioned an excellent weapon, the disc (called) Sudarśana, very fierce(-looking) because of a series of flames (issuing forth). Then Śiva fashioned the thunderbolt with the remaining lustre. (Just) then Jalandhara was seen at the region at the foot of Kailāsa (mountain).

He was surrounded by crores of elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers. Seeing him as he came there, the gods being delighted went (to fight). (Śiva's) attendants hurriedly got ready to fight. All the attendants led by Nandin, Gajānana, Kārtikeya, and maddened to fight, got down from Kailāsa by Śiva's order. Then on the land at the foot of Kailāsa a war between the lordly Pramathas (Śiva's attendants) and the demons took place. It was fierce, and full of weapons and missiles. The earth that resounded with the sounds of multitudes of drums, tabors, conches, giving joy to the heroes, so also with the sounds of elephants, horses and chariots, trembled.

17b-26. With the multitudes of śaktis, iron clubs and arrows, with pestles, barbed missiles and sharp-edged spears, the entire sky shone, as if it was covered with meteors. The entire land shone with the chariots, elephants and horses that were struck down. (The ground) was as it were covered with the tops of mountains struck by thunderbolt. The ground was inaccessible due to the multitudes of demons killed by Pramathas (attendants), and with marrow, blood, mire of flesh etc. Bhārgava brought back to life the multitudes of demons killed by Pramathas. Seeing (Bhārgava) bringing repeatedly back to life by the power of the Sañjīvanī-vidyā those that died in the battle, all the attendants (of Śiva) were perplexed and struck by fear. They told the lord of the god of gods all that Śukra had done. Then from Rudra's mouth a destructive, very fearful deity was produced. Having shanks like tāla (trees), fat, crooked, and pressing the trees with her breasts, she reached the battlefield, and ate the great demons. Seizing Bhārgava in her hand she went and vanished. Seeing Bhārgava seized the divisions of the demon-army had their faces dejected; (but) maddened for fighting, they struck through pride. Struck by the fear of (Śiva's) attendants, the demon army was dispersed

like the scattered heap of grass struck by the speed of wind. (Śiva's) attendants seeing the demon army broken, rejoiced.

27-32. The three very powerful ones—the two generals viz. Niśumbha and Śumbha and the brave Kālanemi—warded off the army of the attendants. They discharged arrows as clouds (discharge water) in the rainy season. Then the volleys of arrows of (i.e. discharged by) the demons, like swarms of locusts, blocked the sky and all directions, and they made the entire army of (Śiva's) attendants tremble. The attendants pierced by hundreds of arrows and shedding showers of blood appeared like kiṁśuka (trees) in spring season. Nothing could be clearly seen. Then (Śiva's) attendants fell, were knocked down, cut off and pierced. Leaving the battlefield, they all turned back. Then Gajānana, lordly Nandin and Kārtikeya, overpowered for long, seeing their army broken and unable to stand (the demon-force) forcibly warded off the excellent demons.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED ONE

The Fight Goes On

Nārada said:

1-19. Those demons on seeing the chiefs of the attendants like Nandin, Gajānana and Kārtikeya, impatiently ran (to them) for duels. Kālanemi, Śumbha and Niśumbha, (each) equipped with an armor, speedily ran (respectively) to Nandin, Gajānana and Kārtikeya. With five arrows Niśumbha pierced Kārtikeya's peacock on his chest with speed and he fell down unconscious. Then, when the angry Kārtikeya took his (missile called) śakti, Niśumbha forcibly knocked him down with śakti. Then Nandīśvara pierced Kālanemi with arrows. With seven he pierced his horses and banners, and with three his charioteer. Kālanemi who was angry, cut off Nandin's bow. Throwing it off, he firmly struck him on his chest with a spear. He, with his chest pierced by a spear and with his horses and charioteer killed, took off

the mountain's peak and threw it at Nandin. Then Śumbha and Gajānana, having a chariot and a rat as their vehicles, fighting with each other, pierced each other with volleys of arrows. The lord of the attendants (i.e. Gajānana) struck Śumbha in his heart with an arrow and knocked on the ground his charioteer with five arrows. Then Śumbha, being extremely angry, pierced Gajānana with sixty arrows, (his) rat with three, and thundered like a cloud. The rat, with his limbs pierced with arrows, walked painfully. Gajānana got down (from the rat) and became a foot soldier, O king. Then Gajānana, having struck Śumbha on his chest with a spear, knocked him down on the ground, and again mounted the rat. Kālanemi and Niśumbha both simultaneously struck Gajānana through anger with arrows, like a great elephant with a goad. Seeing him being troubled, the very strong Vīrabhadra, along with a crore of imps, speedily ran (to him). Kuṣmāṇḍas, Bhairavas, vampires, goblins, bevies of witches and (other) attendants followed him. Then the earth, resounding with kilakila sound (expressing joy), roars like those of lions, growlings, (beatings of) drums, trembled. Then the imps ran and devoured the demons. They jumped and fell and danced on the battlefield. Nandin and Kārtikeya hurriedly came (there) and struck the demons with continuous volleys of arrows in the battle. The army, cut off and broken with the demons killed, knocked down and threatened (by the attendants) was perplexed, and had a dejected face at that time.

20-31. Seeing (his) army destroyed, the strong son of the Ocean, in a chariot with a superior banner, marched against the attendants. Then in both the armies there were loud noise, sound of conches and drums, and roars like those of lions. Then with volleys of arrows, as with covers of mist, Jalandhara blocked the space between heaven and earth. Piercing Gajānana with five (arrows), Nandin too with five, and Vīrabhadra with twenty, he thundered like a cloud. Then Kārtikeya quickly pierced the demon with his (missile called) śakti. Pierced with the śakti he, with his mind a little agitated, rolled about. Then, with his eyes full of anger Jalandhara struck Kārtikeya with a mace. He too fell on the ground. In the same way he speedily knocked down Nandin on the ground. Then the angry Gajānana cut off his mace with his axe. Vīrabhadra pierced the demon on his chest with

three arrows, and cut off with seven (arrows) his horses, banners and concealed bow. Then the very angry lord of demons raising a fierce śakti, knocked down Gajānana and got into another chariot. Then, full of anger, he speedily marched against Vīrabhadra. Then the two, resembling the sun, fought with each other. Vīrabhadra knocked down his horses with arrows. The lord of demons cut off (his) bow, and with an iron bar as his weapon, fought. That demon, quickly attacking Vīrabhadra, struck him on his head with an iron club. The demon too, with his head pierced, and ejecting blood, fell on the ground.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWO

Jalandhara Plays a Trick

Nārada said:

1-12. Seeing that Vīrabhadra fallen, Rudra's attendants leaving the battle through fear and crying came to Śiva. Then hearing the uproar of his attendants, Śiva having mounted on his bull and laughing a little, came to the battle. Seeing Śiva coming, the attendants roaring like lions, again returned (to the battlefield). In the battle they struck the demons with showers of arrows. All the demons, seeing the fierce Śiva, ran away as sins run away through fear on seeing him who observes the vow of Kārtika. Then Jalandhara, seeing the demons fleeing on the battlefield, angrily ran to Śiva and discharged thousands of arrows. Śumbha, Niśumbha, Aśvamukha, Kālanemi, Balāhaka, Khaḍgaroman, Pracaṇḍa and Ghasmara went (i.e. rushed) to Śiva. Śiva, seeing the army of his attendants covered with the darkness caused by the arrows (of the demons), cut off the volley of arrows and with his own arrows covered the sky. He then troubled the demons with the hurricanes of his arrows. With fierce and continuous volleys of arrows he knocked (them) on the ground. Similarly he angrily cut off the head of Khaḍgaroman with a battle-axe. With a club having a skull at the top he also cut into two Balāhaka's head; and binding the demon

Ghasmara with a noose, he knocked him down on the ground. Some were struck by the bull; some were driven away by the arrows. The demons, like elephants tormented by lions, could not stand (before Śiva). Then Jalandhara with his mind full of anger and a voice sharp like (the sound of) thunderbolt, quickly challenged (Śiva) in the battle.

Jalandhara said:

13. Fight with me today. What is the use of striking these? O you having matted hair, show me whatever might you have.

Nārada said:

14-27. Speaking like this he struck Śiva with seventy arrows. He, laughing a little, cut them off before they reached (him) with sharp arrows. Then with seven (arrows) he cut off his horses, banners, umbrella and bow. He the powerful one, with his bow cut off and without his chariot, took a mace. Śiva ran (to him) and cut into two his mace with arrows. Yet, raising his fist he went to kill Śiva. (Just) then Śiva drove him away up to a krośa with the volleys of arrows. Then the demon Jalandhara, thinking Śiva to be stronger, created a gāndharvī illusion which was wonderful, and deluded Śiva. Then gandharvas and bevies of celestial nymphs sang and danced. They sounded musical instruments made of bell-metal, lutes and tabors with one another. Seeing that great wonder Rudra was deluded by the sound, and he did not even notice weapons dropped from his hands. The demon seeing Rudra concentrated, was overpowered by sexual desire, quickly went where Pārvatī was seated, after putting the very strong Śumbha and Niśumbha in (charge of) the battle. That Jalandhara became one having ten staff-like arms, five faces, three eyes, matted hair, and mounted upon a mighty bull. Then seeing Rudra coming, his beloved came from among her friends, and remained within the range of his sight. When the lord of demons saw Pārvatī of a charming body, he ejected his semen and his body became dull. Then Pārvatī, recognising him to be the demon, was overcome by fear, and vanished and went to Uttaramānasa. Not seeing her in a moment like a streak of lighting, he again quickly went to the battle(-field) where god Śiva stood. Then Pārvatī also

mentally recollected the great Viṣṇu. Then the goddess saw him seated by her.

Pārvatī said:

28. O Viṣṇu, the demon Jalandhara has done a great wonder. Do you not know the act of that wicked-minded (demon)?

The lord said:

29. We are following the path shown by him only. Otherwise, he well-protected by (his wife's) chastity would not be fit to be killed.

Nārada said:

30-32. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu again went to Jālandhara city. And Śiva, followed by gandharvas remained in the battle. Seeing the illusion to have disappeared, he awoke. Then Śiva, with his mind amazed, again angrily went to fight Jalandhara. The demon too seeing Śiva to have come back again, covered him with volleys of arrows in the battle.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THREE

Vṛndā Curses Viṣṇu

Nārada said:

1-12. Viṣṇu having gone to Jālandhara broke through his cover and decided to break (i.e. spoil) the vow of chastity of Vṛndā. Respectable Vṛndārakā saw in her dream her husband mounted upon a buffalo, smeared with oil, naked, adorned with black flowers, and waited upon by groups of eaters of raw flesh, (saw him as) having gone to the southern direction clean-shaved and covered with darkness. (She saw) her city plunged into the ocean with herself. Then the young lady, (trying to) ascertain (the meaning of) her dream, awoke. She repeatedly saw the sun that had risen, as having holes and steady. Know-

ing it to be undesirable, she, overcome by fear and weeping did not find pleasure at the principal gate and upper story. Then with two (of her) friends she went to the city-garden. The young lady, even after having gone there, did not get pleasure anywhere. Going from forest to forest, she was not at all aware of herself. Then the young lady who was wandering, saw two demons very fierce, having lion-like faces, and fierce fangs and eyes. Seeing them, she being extremely alarmed, became wholly engaged in running. She saw a calm ascetic observing silence with his disciples. Then putting, through fear, her creeper-like arm round his neck she said: "O sage, protect me who have sought your shelter." The sage, seeing her alarmed and followed by the demons, angrily turned away the fierce demons just with a *hum* sound. Vṛndā, seeing them to have gone to the sky due to his *hum* sound, fell (i.e. prostrated herself) on the ground like a staff and spoke (these) words:

Vṛndā said:

13-14. O you treasure of compassion, you have protected me from a terrible fear. So I desire to say something respectfully. Kindly listen to it. O lord, O you of a good vow, my husband Jalandhara has gone to fight with Rudra. Tell me how he is (faring) in the battle.

Nārada said:

15-18. The sage having heard the words looked about with compassion. Just then two lordly monkeys came and saluting him stood before him. Then ordered by the indication of his creeper-like brows, they went to the sky. Having gone, the monkeys returned within half a moment and stood before him. Seeing them having in their hands the head and trunk of the Ocean's son, she, afflicted by the grief for her husband, fell unconscious on the ground. She was sprinkled over with the water from the pitcher and was brought back to consciousness by the sage. Putting her forehead on that of her husband, she, being dejected, wept.

Vṛndā said:

19-20. O lord, how is it that you who formerly amused me

with pleasing news, are not talking to me, your innocent beloved. How is it that you, the conqueror of the three worlds, who vanquished gods with gandharvas and Indra, were killed by an ascetic (i.e. Śiva)?

Nārada said:

21a. Thus weeping, Vṛndā said (these) words to the sage.

Vṛndā said:

21b-22. O you treasure of penance, O best sage, his life is very dear to me. I think you alone are capable of bringing him back to life.

Hearing her words the sage laughed and said:

The sage said:

23. It is not possible to bring back to life him who is killed by Śiva in a battle. Yet full of pity for you, I shall revive him.

Nārada said:

24-26. Speaking like this, when he just vanished, just then the Ocean's son, with his mind pleased, embraced and kissed Vṛndā. Then Vṛndā too seeing her husband, delighted in mind; she lived in the forest with him, and enjoyed with him for many days. Once, at the end of the coitus seeing him to be Viṣṇu only, Vṛndā getting angry censured him and spoke (these) words:

Vṛndā said:

27-31. O Viṣṇu, fie upon the conduct of you, molesting another's wife! I have recognized you to be actually an illusory ascetic. The two door-keepers of you whom you showed me through your Māyā (illusion), shall become demons and kidnap your wife. You too, afflicted with the grief due to your wife and assisted by the monkeys wander in the forest with him, the lord of all who has become your disciple.

Speaking like this, Vṛndā, though prohibited by Viṣṇu, not having any mental attachment for him, entered fire. Then Viṣṇu,

repeatedly remembering her, and having covered himself with the ash of Vṛndā's funeral pyre, remained there only; and though advised by the groups of sages and siddhas, did not obtain peace.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FOUR

The End of Jalandhara

Nārada said:

1-15a. Then Jalandhara seeing Śiva having wonderful valour, fashioned (an) illusory (form of) Pārvatī to delude Śiva. At that time Śiva saw her mounted upon the chariot, weeping, and being killed by Śumbha, Niśumbha and other demons. Seeing Pārvatī like that, Śiva too, with his mind dejected, remained silent with his face hung down and forgetting his valour. Then Jalandhara speedily pierced Śiva in his head, chest and belly with arrows plunging up to their feathered ends. Then being instructed by Viṣṇu, he realised the illusion. He became one having a fierce form, very fierce due to a series of flames. Seeing his extremely fierce form, the demons could not stand before him and took to the ten directions. Then the god gave a curse to Śumbha and Niśumbha: "After having gone away from the battle with me, you will be killed by Pārvatī." Again Jalandhara speedily showered (Śiva) with sharp arrows, so that a great surface of the earth was covered with darkness due to the arrows. While Rudra quickly cut off his arrows, the mighty one quickly struck the bull (Nandin) with an iron bar. Due to that stroke, the bull turned away from the battlefield. Though dragged by Śiva, he did not remain on the battlefield. Then Śiva having a fierce form, and very angry, speedily discharged the Sudarśana disc, bright like the sun. Reaching Jalandhara speedily, it burnt heaven and earth. It took (i.e. cut) off his head with big, long eyes from his body. Resounding the earth his body fell from the chariot; and from his body a lustre came out and merged into Śiva's body. Seeing the lustre coming

out from his body and merging into (the body of) Śiva, gods like Indra with their eyes blooming with joy, saluted Śiva with their heads (bent down) and told him about Viṣṇu's act.

The gods said:

15b-16. O Śiva, you have protected the gods from fear of the enemy. Something else has come up. What should we do there? Deluded by Vṛndā's beauty, Viṣṇu is stupefied.

The lord said:

17. O gods, to remove Viṣṇu's delusion resort to the fascinating Māyā, fit to be resorted to. She will do your work.

Nārada said:

18. Saying so, the god along with the imps and attendants vanished; and gods praised the Mūlā Prakṛti (literally, the original source) to whom the devotees were dear.

The gods said:

19-21. We bow to that pure (cause called) Prakṛti, from which the constituents, sattva (goodness), rajas (activity) and tamas (darkness or ignorance) have come up, which is the primary cause of creation, maintenance and destruction (of the world), by whose desire all this existence and non-existence is spread. O lady with benumbing missiles, the twentythree divisions (principles), that formerly remained in the entire world, are the forms and acts of that (i.e. of you). We bow to her. We bow to that nature of Viṣṇu, which always loves the devotees, and men devoted to whom never meet with poverty, delusion, defeat etc.

Nārada said:

22-29. To him, who, with a concentrated mind, recites this hymn thrice a day, poverty, delusion, difficulties never touch (i.e. come). Those gods who were praising like this, saw in the sky, (Māyā) abiding in an orb of lustre and pervading the atmosphere with a series of flames. They all saw Bhāratī moving in the sky from its midst: "I alone, divided in three ways, remain

with the three constituents. (My three forms are) Gaurī, Lakṣmī and Svarā (respectively endowed) with sattva, rajas and tamas. Go there, O gods; they will do your work."

Nārada said:

O king, when the gods with their eyes blooming with joy due to amazement, were hearing like this, the lustre disappeared. Then all the gods prompted by those words went and, greatly devoted, saluted Gaurī, Lakṣmī and Svarā. O king, then they, loving their devotees, saw the gods bowing down (to them), gave them seeds and said (these) words:

The goddesses said:

Sow these seeds in that place where Viṣṇu remains. Then your undertaking will succeed.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIVE

The Greatness of Dhātrī and Tulasī

Nārada said:

1-15. O best king, from the seeds that were thrown (i.e. sown) there, three plants came up: Dhātrī, Mālatī and Tulasī. Dhātri is said to have come up from Dhātrī (the earth), Mālatī from Lakṣmī, and Tulasī from Gaurī (having) the qualities (constituents viz.) sattva (goodness), rajas (activity) and tamas (darkness, ignorance). O king, Viṣṇu, deluded by the excellence of Vṛndā's beauty, seeing the herbs in the form of women got up in confusion. Then, with his mind attached to (i.e. full of) passion, he saw them. Tulasī and Dhātrī also looked at him with love only. Since formerly Lakṣmī gave the seed deceptively, therefore, the woman who came up from it, became jealous of him. Therefore, she is called Barbarī (i.e. low), and is very much condemned by Viṣṇu. Due to his love for them Dhātrī and Tulasī have always delighted him. Then Viṣṇu, forgetting his grief, went to Vaikuṇṭha with them. He was delighted and

was saluted by all gods. Therefore, Viṣṇu's worship is ordained at the time of the conclusion of the Kārtika (vow), since it is said always to cause delight (when done) at the root of Tulasī. O king, the house of him in whose house stands a Tulasī-grove, is of the nature of a holy place. Yama's servants do not come (there). Those best men who plant a Tulasī-grove which destroys all sins, which is auspicious, which satisfies desires, never see (Yama) the Sun's son. The three, viz. seeing (i.e. visiting) Narmadā, bathing in Gaṅgā, and contact with Tulasī-grove, are said to be equivalent. Due to men's planting, protecting, sprinkling, seeing and touching Tulasī, Tulasī removes their sin committed through speech, mind and body. He who would worship Viṣṇu with Tulasī-blossoms, does not go to the abode of embryo (i.e. is not reborn), and gets salvation. There is no doubt about this. In the Tulasī-leaf live holy places like Puṣkara, so also rivers like Gaṅgā and gods like Viṣṇu. O best king, if a man dies with a Tulasī-leaf (on his person), he obtains absorption with Viṣṇu. This is the truth (and the only) truth.

16-29. Even Yama cannot look at him, even though he is full of hundreds of sins, who dies with Tulasī-clay smeared (on his body). He who would put on the sandal from Tulasī-wood, great sin, though committed by him, does not touch his body. O king, a man should offer śrāddha wherever there would be the shade of a Tulasī-grove. (Śrāddha) offered there becomes inexhaustible for the manes of the dead ancestors. The dead ancestors in hell, of him who offers piṇḍas under the shade of a Tulasī-plant, are gratified, O best king. He who keeps the Dhātrī-fruit on his head, in his hand, in his mouth, on his body, should be known to be Viṣṇu himself, O best king. He on whose body the Dhātrī-fruit or clay (from the root) of Tulasī from Dvārakā always remains, is called 'liberated while alive.' The fruit for that man who bathes with water mixed with Dhātrī-fruits or with Tulasī-leaves, is said to be like that of a bath in Gaṅgā. The man who would worship the deities with Dhātrī-leaves or Dhātrī-fruits, would obtain the fruit of worshipping them with various flowers (made) of gold. In Kārtika when the Sun has resorted to the Libra sign of the Zodiac, holy places, sages, deities, sacrifices always remain resorted to the Dhātrī. One who plucks a Tulasī-leaf on the twelfth day, and a Dhātrī-

fruit in Kārtika, would go to very condemned hells. The sin due to contact with (prohibited) food, of the man who eats under the shade of a Dhātrī plant in Kārtika, perishes for the (whole) year. One who worships Viṣṇu (while sitting) at the root of a Dhātrī plant in Kārtika, has always worshipped at all places sacred to Viṣṇu. Even the god (Brahmā) having four mouths would not be able to narrate the greatness of Dhātrī and Tulasī as of god Viṣṇu. One who devoutly listens to or causes (others) to listen to the cause of the origin of Dhātrī and Tulasī, has his sins shaken off, and he, seated in an excellent aeroplane with his ancestors, goes to heaven.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIX

The Kalahā Episode

Pṛthu said:

1-2. O brāhmaṇa, you told me properly the greatness of Tulasī along with its history. I have listened to this great, very wonderful (account). Tell (me) what great fruit a man gets, who observes the Kārtika vow; (tell) its greatness again. (Tell) also who observed it? and in what manner (did he observe it)?

Nārada said:

3-10. Formerly in the region of Sahyādri in the city of Karavīra there lived a brāhmaṇa known as Dharmadatta, a knower of Dharma. He always observed Viṣṇu's vow and was always engaged in worshipping Viṣṇu. He was fond of muttering the hymn of the twelve syllables and guests were dear to him. Once in the month of Kārtika he went to Viṣṇu's temple for keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, when the fourth part of the night had remained. When he was taking the materials for Viṣṇu's worship, he saw a demoness of a terrible voice, that had come there. Her fangs and face were crooked; her tongue had gone down; her eyes were red; she was naked; the flesh (in her body) was dry (i.e. she was emaciated); her lips were long

(i.e. protruding); her voice was purring. Seeing her, he, afflicted with fear and with limbs trembling, quickly struck her with the materials of worship and water. She was (thus) struck (by him) after remembering Viṣṇu's name and with Tulasī-water. Therefore, all her sin perished. Then she, remembering her former existence due to the maturity of her acts, told him her entire condition, after saluting him (by prostrating before him) like a staff.

Kalahā said:

11. I have been reduced to this condition as a result of my deeds in the former (existence). O brāhmaṇa, how shall I again attain excellent and auspicious condition?

Nārada said:

12. Seeing her bowing down before (him) and narrating those acts of her, the brāhmaṇa, extremely amazed, then said (these) words:

Dharmadatta said:

13. As a result of which act are you reduced to such a condition? Wherefrom (do you come)? Who are you? What is your disposition? Tell all that to me.

Kalahā said:

14-18a. O brāhmaṇa, in a city in Saurāṣṭra there was a brāhmaṇa named Bhikṣu. I was first his very cruel wife named Kalahā. I never did good to him even by words; I who broke his command and who always liked to quarrel, never gave sweet food to my husband. Then the brāhmaṇa was dejected through grief; that my husband thought of marrying another woman. Then, O brāhmaṇa, taking poison, I cast off my life. Then Yama's followers bound me and took me away. And Yama seeing me then, asked Citragupta.

Yama said:

18b-19. O Citragupta, see what act she has done. Let her obtain good or bad fruit of her act.

Then Citragupta, censuring her, said (these) words:

Citragupta said:

20-25. She has not done any good act at all. She (herself) ate savoury food, (but) did not give it to her husband. Therefore, let her be (born) in her own feces in the stock of a cockroach. Then, O Hari, she, who hated her husband and always quarrelled, will be (born) in the stock of a female pig eating feces. Since she always ate from the pot in which the food is cooked, (let her be born) among female-cats eating her own young ones. Since she killed herself with reference to her husband, therefore, let this extremely censured one live among ghosts and goblins. Then with the demons she should be taken to the Maru country. Let her, having a ghosts' body, stay there for a long time. Thus having undergone (i.e. passed through) three stocks (i.e. existences) (she will be) doing auspicious acts.

Kalahā said:

26-31. That I (i.e. like that I) remained for five hundred years in a ghost's body. Everyday I was oppressed by hunger and thirst and was afflicted due to my own act(s). Then I, oppressed by hunger everyday, (resorted to) a merchant's body and came to the confluence of Kṛṣṇā and Veṇī in the southern country. When I resorted to that bank, I was forcibly thrown away from that body(?) by the attendants of Śiva and Viṣṇu. Then, O brāhmaṇa, I who was emaciated with hunger, who was wandering, and whose sin had gone away due to the contact of the Tulasī-water thrown (by you), saw you. Therefore, O best brāhmaṇa, have pity on me. How shall I be free from the three very fearful existences, and from this ghost's body?

Hearing like this the words of Kalahā, the brāhmaṇa, full of affliction and amazement due to the maturity of her acts, and with his mind restless due to having seen her misery thought for a long time, and sorrowfully spoke (these) words:

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVEN

Kalahā Is Emancipated

Dharmadatta said:

1-5. By means of (visits to) holy places, gifts and vows etc. sins perish. But you, remaining in an imp's body are not entitled to them. My mind dejected at seeing this misery of you will not be pleased without emancipating you who are unhappy. Your sin, giving you the three existences as a result of its maturity, is very grave. It cannot be exhausted by other meritorious acts. The state of an imp is very censurable. Therefore, obtain a good condition by means of half the merit of the Kārtika vow observed by me from my birth. Sacrifices, gifts, (visits to) holy places and vows certainly do not at all have the equivalence to the merit due to the Kārtika vow.

Nārada said:

6-8. Speaking like this, when Dharmadatta sprinkled her with water mixed with Tulasī, repeating the twelve-syllabled (hymn), (just) then she was free from imphood, resembled the flame of a blazing fire, had a divine form, and brightened up the directions with her beauty. Then she saluted the brāhmaṇa (by prostrating herself) like a staff on the ground, and in a voice stammering with joy, said (these) words:

Kalahā said:

9. O you best brāhmaṇa, due to your favour I have been free from hell. Certainly you have been (the emancipator) of me who was drowning in the ocean of sin.

Nārada said:

10-13. She who was talking like this to the brāhmaṇa saw a bright aeroplane with attendants having Viṣṇu's form coming from the sky. Then two righteous door-keepers of good conduct put her into that excellent aeroplane attended upon by a band of celestial nymphs. Dharmadatta saw that aeroplane and was amazed. Seeing the two meritorious ones he fell on the ground like a staff. The two righteous ones of good conduct, raised the

brāhmaṇa who had bowed down, and praising him spoke (these) words:

The two attendants said:

14-26. It's good, O best brāhmaṇa, that you are always devoted to Viṣṇu, you are kind to the helpless, you know Dharma and are very much engrossed in Viṣṇu's vow. From your birth you observed this Kārtika vow. By giving half of (the religious merit due to) it her sins collected formerly in hundreds of existences, have perished. Due to your keeping awake in honour of Viṣṇu etc. this aeroplane has come; so also (have come) the residence in Vaikuṇṭha, proximity of Viṣṇu, and absorption into him. Those who have devoutly propitiated Viṣṇu as you have done, O Dharmadatta, are lucky and contented. Their existence is fruitful. What will Viṣṇu who formerly put Uttāna's son (Dhruva) at a fixed place, and by merely remembering whose name human beings get good position, not give to human beings, when he is properly propitiated? Formerly the lordly elephant seized by a crocodile became free by (merely) remembering his name, obtained his proximity and became one called 'Jaya' (i.e. came to be called Jaya). Therefore, Viṣṇu worshipped by you will give you with your two wives his proximity for many thousand years. Then, after your religious merit is exhausted, when you will go to the earth, you will be a famous king born in the solar dynasty named Daśaratha with your two wives and with this one as the third (wife) sharing half of your religious merit. There on the earth also Viṣṇu doing the work of the gods, will give you his proximity after having made himself (i.e. born as) your son. For you sacrifices, gifts, visits to holy places are not superior to this your vow (taken) from your birth and pleasing Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, you are lucky that you have observed this vow pleasing the lord of the world, due to the fruit of the half portion of which this one is being taken by us to the same world as of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHT

King Cola and Brāhmaṇa Viṣṇudāsa

Nārada said:

1. Hearing her words like this, Dharmadatta, being amazed, bowed on the ground (i.e. prostrated himself) like a staff and said these words:

Dharmadatta said:

2-3. By means of sacrifices, gifts, vows, (visits to) holy places, austerities, all devotees properly propitiate Viṣṇu who removes affliction. (Tell me) that which pleases Viṣṇu and which brings about proximity of Viṣṇu and having done which all those are done.

The two attendants said:

4-13. O brāhmaṇa, you have asked well. Listen with a concentrated mind to a story, with its history, which took place in olden times and which is being told (by us). Formerly in Kāntipura there lived an emperor Cola after whom, it is said, the country was called Cola. While he was ruling over the globe, no man was poor, unhappy, of a sinful design or diseased. Of him, performing many sacrifices (i.e. while he was performing many sacrifices), both the banks of the Tāmraparṇī (river) were full of beauty with golden sacrificial posts resembling Caitraratha (Kubera's garden). Once, O brāhmaṇa, that king went to Anantaśayana where this lord of the three worlds resorts to sleep. There the king having duly worshipped god Viṣṇu with divine gems, pearls, and beautiful golden flowers, saluted him (prostrating before him) like a staff and sat (there). When he was seated he saw a brāhmaṇa called Viṣṇudāsa, who had come with Tulasī-water in his hand for worshipping the god and living in his own city. Having come there, the brāhmaṇa-sage worshipped the god of gods after having bathed him with Tulasī blossoms and leaves and with (the recital of) the Viṣṇu-hymn. Seeing that the worship done (by him) with jewels (etc.), was covered with Tulasī (-leaves) etc. the got angry and spoke (these) words:

The king said:

14-16. O Viṣṇudāsa, how is it that the beautiful worship done by me with rubies and gold is covered with Tulasī-leaves by you? Since you cover this very beautiful worship offered by me, I think you do not know devotion to Viṣṇu and you are wretched.

Hearing these words, the best brāhmaṇa got angry, and transgressing (i.e. not caring for) the greatness of the king, said (these) words then:

Viṣṇudāsa said:

17. O king, you do not know salvation; you are proud of your wealth. Tell me which Viṣṇu-vow you have observed before.

The two attendants said:

18-22. O brāhmaṇa, hearing those words of the brāhmaṇa the best king laughed and proudly said these words to Viṣṇudāsa: "O brāhmaṇa, if, being very proud, you are telling like this, (tell me) how much devotion to Viṣṇu you poor and indigent one have. O brāhmaṇa, you have not offered sacrifices or gifts. Nor anywhere have you put up a temple before. If the pride of you who are like this persists due to your devotion, then may these best brāhmaṇas today hear my words. This dispute will go (i.e. cease). I shall have actual perception of Viṣṇu so that all these and you will realise our devotion."

The two attendants said:

23-30. Speaking like this, O brāhmaṇa, the king went to his palace; and making Mudgala the preceptor he commenced a sacrificial session (in honour) of Viṣṇu, at which hosts of sages had come and many presents were given, which was rich like the one offered formerly by Brahmā at Prayāga. Viṣṇudāsa, observing the vow, remained just there in the temple, always observing these five restraints pleasing Viṣṇu: observing properly the vow in Māgha and Kārtika, maintaining a Tulasī-grove, observing the Ekādaśī-vow, and muttering the twelve-syllabled hymn. So also everyday he worshipped Viṣṇu in the sixteen ways with auspicious (acts) like dancing and singing. (Thus) he observed these

vows. He, viewing all equally, always remembered Viṣṇu while walking, eating and even while sleeping, and saw Viṣṇu remaining (i.e. as present) in every being. He daily observed the special restraints in Māgha and Kārtika for pleasing Viṣṇu, so also their proper conclusion. When king Cola and Viṣṇudāsa, who were observing that vow, who had devoted their senses and acts to deeds for him (i.e. Viṣṇu), were thus propitiating (Viṣṇu) the lord of Lakṣmī, much time passed.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINE

King Cola and Viṣṇudāsa Become Attendants of Viṣṇu

The two attendants said:

1-13. When once the brāhmaṇa Viṣṇudāsa cooked (food) after having duly performed his daily rite, someone unnoticed took away (the food). The brāhmaṇa, not (being able to) see him, did not at all cook again through fear of violating the vow of his evening worship. On the next day, when he, after having cooked, was about to offer it to Viṣṇu, somebody again took it away. In this way, for seven days somebody (daily) took away the food, O brāhmaṇa. He was amazed and thought in his mind thus: 'Oh, who comes daily and takes away my food? This place of the holy ascetics is not at all to be abandoned by me. If, having cooked again, I eat (the food), then how can I give up the evening worship (of the deity)? I shall not eat after cooking some food. A devotee of Viṣṇu does not eat without offering everything to Viṣṇu. How can I again remain in (i.e. observe) this vow by fasting? Today I shall properly guard the food.' Thinking thus he cooked the food and remained there unnoticed. Just then he saw a cāṇḍāla ready to take away the cooked food. He was emaciated with hunger, his face was melancholy, and only bones and skin were left (in his body). Seeing him, the best brāhmaṇa had his mind distressed with pity. Seeing the (cāṇḍāla) stealing the food, the brāhmaṇa said, "Wait, wait. How do you

eat the dry food? Have this ghee." Seeing the best brāhmaṇa speaking like this and coming (near him), he, through fear, ran fast, and dropped down unconscious. That best brāhmaṇa, seeing the cāṇḍāla frightened and unconscious, speedily approached him and fanned him with the ends of his garment through compassion (for him).

14-21. Viṣṇudāsa saw him who got up, to be actually god Viṣṇu holding a conch, a disc, and a mace, (and) wearing a yellow garment, having four arms, having the mark of Śrīvatsa, wearing a crown, and having his chest marked with Kaustubha resembling atasī flower. Seeing him, the best brāhmaṇa was full of good thoughts. At that time he was unable to praise and salute him. Then gods like Indra came there at that time; and gandharvas and celestial nymphs gladly sang and danced. At that time the place was crowded with hundreds of aeroplanes and it resounded with the sounds of songs and musical instruments. Then Viṣṇu, having embraced his virtuous devotee, gave him absorption into himself and took him to Vaikuṇṭha. King Cola who was initiated (for a sacrifice) saw Viṣṇudāsa seated in the excellent aeroplane in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. Seeing Viṣṇudāsa going to Viṣṇu's abode, he quickly called his preceptor Mudgala and thus spoke to him:

Cola said:

22-25. That brāhmaṇa vying with whom I performed that sacrifice etc., is, after taking up Viṣṇu's form, going to Viṣṇu's abode. I who was initiated for this sacrificial session, offered oblations into fire through you and made the brāhmaṇas completely (happy) in their minds through gifts etc. That god yet does not certainly become pleased. (But) that Viṣṇu actually presented himself (before the brāhmaṇa) by his devotion. Therefore, Viṣṇu is not at all pleased by means of gifts and sacrifices. Devotion alone is the means of seeing that lord.

The two attendants said:

26-32. Saying so he consecrated his sister's son on the throne. Since from his childhood he was initiated for the sacrifice, he was sonless. Therefore, even now in his kingdom sisters' sons only, continuing the convention followed (previo-

usly) become heir to the kingdom. Then going to the place of the sacrifice, and standing before the hole made for receiving the sacrificial fire, addressing Viṣṇu, he loudly spoke (these words) three times: "O Viṣṇu, give me a stable devotion through acts of mind, speech and body." Saying like this he fell into the fire, when all were watching. Then Mudgala angrily extracted the tuft of hair on the crown of his head. Since then, even up to this day the Mudgalas are without the tuft of hair on the crowns on their heads. Just then Viṣṇu, loving his devotees, appeared in the fire in the hole made for receiving the sacrificial fire. Viṣṇu embraced him and put him into an excellent aeroplane. Having embraced him and assimilated him into himself, the lord of gods, surrounded by gods, went to his abode in Vaikuṇṭha with him.

Nārada said:

33. That Viṣṇu dear to Lakṣmī, made the two having similar forms, his doorkeepers. He who was Viṣṇudāsa became Puṇyaśīla (by name), and he who was king Cola became Suśīla by name.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TEN

The Story of Jaya and Vijaya

Dharmadatta said:

1. I have heard that Jaya and Vijaya are Viṣṇu's doorkeepers. (But I do not know) what they did due to which they had these forms.

The two attendants said:

2-14. Due to just being seen by Kardama, Devahūtī, Tṛṇabindu's daughter, formerly gave birth to two sons, O brāhmaṇa. The elder one was Jaya by name, and the younger Vijaya. On (i.e. from) the other wife was born Kapila, a knower of yoga, and Dharma. Jaya and Vijaya were always engrossed in devotion

to Viṣṇu. Controlling their senses, they were disposed to virtue. Everyday they both recited the eight-syllabled hymn and observed the Viṣṇu-vow. Viṣṇu always presented himself at their worship (of him). Sometime Marutta invited them for a sacrifice. They, skilled in performing a sacrifice, went there, being waited upon by divine sages. Jaya became the Brahmā priest and Vijaya the sacrificing priest. Then they fully accomplished the sacrificial rite. Marutta, after having bathed at the end of the sacrifice, gave them much wealth. Taking that wealth they went to their hermitage. O sage, then for worshipping and gratifying Viṣṇu they vied with each other and they divided the wealth. Jaya said: "Let it be divided into equal parts." Vijaya said: "Whatever is received by one is one's (share)." Then Jaya angrily and with his mind agitated, cursed Vijaya; "Since having received (the wealth) you are not giving it, therefore, be a crocodile." Vijaya too, having heard that curse of (i.e. pronounced by) him, cursed him: "Be an elephant", since he, erring due to arrogance had cursed him. Seeing lord Viṣṇu at the time of the daily worship, they told him like that. They solicited Lakṣmī's lord for rendering the curse ineffective. "O god, how shall we, your devotees, go to the stock of a crocodile and an elephant? O ocean of kindness, turn away that curse."

The lord said:

15-29. The words of my devotees shall never be untrue. I too can never change it. Formerly due to Prahlāda's words I appeared in a pillar. In the same way due to Ambarīṣa's words I arose on the way(?). Therefore, having certainly undergone these two curses pronounced by yourselves, obtain my eternal position.

Speaking like this, Viṣṇu vanished.

The two attendants said:

Then the crocodile and the elephant were (born) on the bank of Gaṇḍakī. Even in that state they remembered their (former) birth, and observed Viṣṇu-vow. Some time in Kārtika the elephant went to Gaṇḍakī to bathe. Just then, the crocodile remembering the cause of the curse seized him. The elephant

seized by the crocodile remembered Viṣṇu. Just then Viṣṇu, holding a conch, a disc, a mace appeared (there). Then the lord, throwing his disc, emancipated the crocodile and the elephant, and absorbing them into himself, took them to Vaikuṇṭha. Since then the place is known as Harikṣetra, where even (now) the stones bear the mark of the disc. Those two, O brāhmaṇa, known as Jaya and Vijaya, and dear to Viṣṇu, are his doorkeepers. Therefore, you too, O you who know piety, always observing Viṣṇu's vow and having given up jealousy and hypocrisy, view all equally. Always bathe in the morning (when the Sun is) in (the signs of) Libra, Capricornus and Aries, and maintaining a Tulasī-grove observe the Ekādaśī-vow. Always worship brāhmaṇas, cows, and Viṣṇu's devotees. Do not eat masūra (pulse), gruel made from fermentation of boiled rice and egg-plants. O Dharmadatta, by devotion to him (i.e. Viṣṇu) you too, on your death obtain that highest position of Viṣṇu, as we (have obtained). Sacrifices, gifts and (visits to holy places) are not superior to your vow (commenced) from birth and pleasing Viṣṇu. O best brāhmaṇa, you are lucky that you have observed this vow which gratifies the lord of the world, having got the fruit of which this meritorious one is taken by us to the world of Viṣṇu.

Nārada said:

30-32. Having thus instructed that Dharmadatta, the two, getting into the aeroplane, went with Kalahā to Viṣṇu's abode. Dharmadatta also, being convinced, observed the vow and on his death went, accompanied by his two wives, to that place of the lord. One who duly listens to his account which took place in ancient times, his mind, by the favour of the lord of the world, becomes disposed to reach Viṣṇu's proximity.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED ELEVEN

The Greatness of Kṛṣṇā and Veṇī

Pṛthu said:

1-2. You told (me) that formerly Kalahā came out of the body of the merchant on the bank (of the confluence) of Kṛṣṇā and Veṇī (and went) with the attendants of Śiva and Viṣṇu. (Now) O you who know Dharma, tell me about the greatness of the two rivers and that place. I have a curiosity about it.

Nārada said:

3-8a. Kṛṣṇā is actually the dark-bodied one, and Veṇī is god Śiva. (Even) the Four-faced (Brahmā) is not able to describe the greatness of their confluence. Yet, I shall tell you about their origin. Listen to it. Formerly in the age of Cākṣuṣa Manu, Manu's grandfather (i.e. Brahmā) was ready to perform a sacrifice on the charming peak of the Sahya mountain. Surrounded by hosts of all gods, and with Viṣṇu and Śiva, he after making the preparation for the sacrifice, went to the peak of that mountain. At the time (sacred to) god Brahmā (i.e. the early part of the day) the hosts of sages like Bhṛgu gathered there to initiate him. Then, through the brāhmaṇas Viṣṇu called the elder wife Svarā. When she was coming slowly, Bhṛgu said to Viṣṇu:

Bhṛgu said:

8b-9a. O Viṣṇu, you called Svarā; but she is not coming quickly. This is the transgression of the auspicious moment. How can the rite of initiation be done?

Viṣṇu said:

9b-10a. If Svarā is not coming quickly, then put Gāyatrī here (i.e. in her place). Can this wife of him also not join him in the meritorious deed?

Nārada said:

10b-13. Rudra also, in the same way, approved of Viṣṇu's words. That Bhṛgu, hearing those words, seated Gāyatrī to the right of Brahmā, and performed the rite of initiation. O king,

while they were duly performing the rite of initiation of Brahmā, Svarā came to the place of the sacrifice. Seeing Gāyatrī initiated with Brahmā, Svarā due to jealousy for her co-wife, angrily said (these) words:

Svarā said:

14-16. (When) those that do not deserve to be honoured, are honoured, and those that deserve to be honoured are ignored, three (inauspicious things) take place there: famine, death, fear. You have seated this younger one on my seat. Therefore, all of you, being devoid of consciousness will have various forms. Since she has sat on my seat, on the right (of Brahmā), therefore let her have a body of a river invisible to the people.

Nārada said:

17-18. Then hearing that curse, Gāyatrī trembled; and getting up, she, though restrained by gods, cursed that Svarā. "As Brahmā is your husband, so he is also mine. You have in vain cursed me. You too (will) become a river."

Nārada said:

19. Then all gods led by Śiva and Viṣṇu felt grief; saluting (by prostrating) like a staff on the ground, they requested Svarā:

The gods said:

20-21. O goddess, since you have cursed all of us like Brahmā, if we all become devoid of consciousness and turn into rivers, then these three worlds will certainly perish. You have acted imprudently. Therefore, withdraw this curse.

Svarā said:

22-24. O best gods, since at the commencement of the sacrifice you did not worship the lord of the attendants (i.e. Gaṇeśa), therefore this obstacle, due to my anger, has indeed come up. Nor again, these words of me will be untrue. Therefore, with your portions dulled, turn into rivers. We, the two co-wives, shall become two rivers, flowing into the west, by means of our portions, O gods.

Nārada said:

25-31. O king, then hearing her words Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva became dulled and turned into rivers just by means of their portions. Viṣṇu became Kṛṣṇā, and god Śiva Veṇī. Brahmā then separately became Gaṅgā having humps (of waves). The wise gods also, having dulled their portions, became good rivers separately (flowing) from the peaks of Sahya mountain. The best rivers, (formed) with the portions of gods, flowed into the east. Gāyatrī and Svarā joined together, flowing westward, came to be called Sāvitrī. Both Viṣṇu and Śiva appointed at that sacrifice, became (known) by the names Mahābala and Atibala. O king, I am not able to describe the greatness of the two rivers. Gods like Brahmā went (from the place) and remain, through their portions, as rivers. Every act of him who listens with devotion to this great (account of) Kṛṣṇā, removing sins or causes (others) to hear it, would become meritorious, and gets the fruit due to seeing her and bathing in her (water).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWELVE

Portions of Merit and Demerit That Go to Others

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

1-5. Hearing these words of him, Pṛthu, with his mind amazed, devoutly honoured Nārada and allowed him to go, O dear one. Therefore, this triad of vows—the two in Māgha and Kārtika, and the one of Ekādaśī—is very dear to me. To me Tulasī among plants is dear, Kārtika among months is dear, Ekādaśī among days is dear, and Dvārakā among the holy places is dear. He who with his senses conquered resorts to these, becomes dear to me; not like that (i.e. so dear) with sacrifices etc. He who is devoted to these, should not, due to my grace, he afraid of sins as a rule.

Satyabhāmā said:

6-8. O lord what you told me, viz. that Kalahā was emancipated by the religious merit given by others, causes wonder. This month of Kārtika having such efficacy, is dear to you, since due to bath and (giving) gifts (in that month) sins like cheating one's master have gone (i.e. go). O lord, if one gets the religious merit given by another person, then in what way does a man get the religious merit not given to him?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

9-29. Listen properly with which act men receive religious merit and sins not given to them. The region, the village and the families should have the portion of (the fruit of) acts etc. But in Kali-age only the doer gets the fruit of the religious merit or the sin. This arrangement is said (to obtain) even when no contact takes place. Know as to how religious merit and sins pass (to another person) through contact. Due to being paired together, going together, eating from the same pot, a man would duly get half the portion of religious merit or sin. A man always gets one-fourth portion of the religious merit or sin (of another person) through teaching, acting as a priest at a sacrifice, or eating (after sitting) in the same line. A man gets one-sixth portion of the religious merit or sin (of another) through (sitting on) the same seat, same vehicle, and due to the contact of (another man's) breath with his body. A man always gets one-tenth portion of the religious merit and sins (of another person) through touching (him), talking (to him) or praising (that) other person. A man would obtain one-hundredth portion of the religious merit or sin of another person by seeing, listening to, or thinking in his mind about him. He who censures another person, acts wickedly towards him or disregards him, gets (the fruit of) the sin committed by him, and gives him his own religious merit. A person, except the wife, a hired servant and a disciple of the man who does meritorious acts, serving him, and not getting the money in accordance with his service would also share the religious merit of him (who is served) in lieu of his service. A waiter at meals who ignores serving a man taking food after sitting

in the same line as others, would share one-sixth of his sin. He who, while bathing or performing sandhyā prayer etc., would touch or speak (with another person), would very certainly give one-sixth of his religious merit to that person. Another person who gives money to a person who asks for it for a religious purpose would get the fruit due to his (i.e. latter's) religious merit. He who performs a religious act after snatching another's wealth, incurs sin, and the fruit due to that (religious act) goes to the person having money (and giving it for the religious purpose). A rich man shares in proportion with his wealth the religious merit of the man who dies without repaying the money (borrowed from the rich man for the religious act). One who gives an idea, one who approves of it, one who gives the implement, one who compels, would obtain one-sixth portion of the religious merit or sin. A king would take out from his subjects one-sixth portion of their religious merit or sin. A preceptor would obtain half the portion of the religious merit from (i.e. of) his disciple; a husband (would obtain half the portion of the religious merit) of his wife, a father of his son, and a wife also (would obtain half the portion of the religious merit) of her husband. She, pleasing him, always behaves according to his mind (i.e. desire). The giver of a gift for the man who gives gifts with the hand of (i.e. through) another person, except a hired servant or his son, would extract one-sixth portion (of the religious merit of the donor). He who gives subsistence would extract one-sixth of the portion of him to whom the subsistence is given, provided he does not make him serve himself or any other (person).

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

30. In this way, the religious merit and sins earned by others, always go, though not given (to others). Listen to this excellent account, which is old, and which gives great religious merit.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTEEN

Dhaneśvara's Story

Śri Kṛṣṇa said:

1-12. Formerly there was a brāhmaṇa named Dhaneśvara who lived in the city of Avantī. He had fallen from the status of a brāhmaṇa, was addicted to sins, and was very wicked. He sold liquor, blankets, hide, and behaved falsely. His mind was addicted to stealing, prostitutes, drinking and gambling. That Dhaneśvara, going from one region to another for selling (these articles), sometime went to Māhiṣmatī city. It was fashioned formerly by Mahiṣa. By its rampart shone Narmadā that destroyed sins. Seeing there men observing Kārtika-vow and coming from different directions, he, selling (his articles) stayed there for a month. He, everyday wandering on the bank of Narmadā for selling (his articles), saw brāhmaṇas who bathed (in the river) and were engaged in muttering hymns and worshipping deities. Everywhere Dhaneśvara, full of curiosity saw some men reciting a Purāṇa, some engaged in listening to it, some engaged in eulogising Viṣṇu with dancing, singing and musical instruments, some having marks (like a conch etc. in honour) of Viṣṇu, and some having on their persons garlands and Tulasī. He, wandering there everyday, due to seeing and coming in contact with Viṣṇu's devotees, heard the name of Viṣṇu etc. On his way he who resided there for a month, saw (people) keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu at the time of the concluding rite of Kārtika-vow. On the full-moon day he saw the worship of two kinds, so also presents and meals and offering of lights done by the observers of the vow. Then at the time of the sunset he saw the ceremony of illumination done for pleasing the enemy of Tripura (i.e. Śiva).

13-17a. Since on that day Śiva burnt the three cities (of Tripura), therefore, a great festival is celebrated by the devotees on that day. All the religious rites of him who would discriminate between me and Śiva, would undoubtedly be fruitless. That Dhaneśvara, seeing dance etc. there, wandered. Just then he was bitten by a black serpent and deprived of strength he dropped. Men seeing him fallen, and full of pity, surrounded

him. Then they sprinkled his face with water mixed with Tulasī. Then, when his body dropped (i.e. he died), Yama's servants bound him, and angrily tormented him with strokes of whips, and took him to Saṁyaminī (Yama's city). Seeing him Citragupta chided him and told Yama the bad deeds done by him from his childhood.

Citragupta said:

17b-19a. No good deed of (i.e. done by) him since his childhood is noticed. O Sun's son, his bad deeds cannot be described even in many years. O lord, this one appears to be just sin incarnate. Therefore, till the time of the final deluge he should be roasted in hell.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

19b-20a. Hearing these words, Yama showing his form resembling the fatal fire, angrily said to his servants:

Yama said:

20b-21a. O you who look after the dead, take him tormenting him with your iron clubs. Quickly put him into Kumbhīpāka (hell) having the sound of the boiling of oil.

21b-25a. When he was thrown there, Kumbhīpāka became cool, as when in olden times Prahlāda was thrown into it. Seeing that great wonder, the official looking after the dead was amazed. He speedily came and told it to Yama. Yama heard the curious thing told by the official looking after the dead. Saying, "Oh, what is it?" he thought (over it) properly. Just then Nārada, smiling, came there quickly. He was properly honoured by Yama after seeing him. He said these words:

Nārada said:

25b-34. O Sun's son, he is not fit to suffer in hells, since his acts are those that keep away hell. That man who would see, touch or talk to those who do meritorious acts, obtains one-sixth of the merit of those doing meritorious deeds. Since he had innumerable contacts with the observers of the Viṣṇu vow in Kārtika for a month, therefore he shares a portion of their

religious merit. Since he served them, he enjoys the entire religious merit of the vow. Therefore, his religious merit due to the Kārtika-vow cannot be measured, (since) Viṣṇu, to whom good devotees are dear, does destroy even the major sins of those who observe the Kārtika-vow. Since in the end (i.e. at the time of his death) he was favoured by Viṣṇu's devotees by repeating the names (of Viṣṇu) and by sprinkling water mixed with Tulasī (-leaves), therefore he is not be roasted in a hell. Therefore, with his sins destroyed, he deserves to get a good position. As due to deliberate or non-deliberate sins one has to suffer from torment in hell, in the same way one has to enjoy pleasures in heaven. Therefore, he who unintentionally got the religious merit, would, living in the stock of yakṣa, see all hells and would undergo the fruit of his sins.

When Nārada, after speaking like this left, Yama, realising his religious merit on hearing his (i.e. Nārada's) words, again took the brāhmaṇa through his servant showing him all groups of hell.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FOURTEEN

The Seven Hells Shown to Dhaneśvara

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

1. Then Yama's servant, the official looking after the dead, took Dhaneśvara and showed him all hells.

The official looking after the dead said:

2-24. O Dhaneśvara, see all these very fearful hells into which sinners are always roasted by Yama's servants. This hell, appearing fearful, is called Taptavāluka in which those sinners whose bodies are burnt, cry. Those men who do not honour the guests emaciated with hunger, who have come to their house after having made an offering to all deities, are roasted here due to their acts. Those who have kicked the preceptor, fire, brāh-

maṇas, deities, those that are crowned, have their feet burnt. This hell has six divisions, and is reached by those who have committed various sins. Similarly this is the great hell (called) Andhatāmisra. O brāhmaṇa, see the body (of a man) due to his sinful act, is being pierced by insects of fierce mouths that have come in contact with him. This also has six divisions. In them sinful human beings are roasted with their vitals pierced by horses, crows, beasts and birds. The third hell is Krakaca, appearing fierce, where the sinful human beings are cut with swords. It has six divisions like (the one having) the Asipatra-grove. Those men who separate (others) from their wives, sons etc., so also with other beloved persons, are roasted here. The sinners, crying and running here and there through fear of being cut with blades of swords, are roasted here. See (them). This fourth hell is called Argala. See. Those sinners, being bound by Yama's servants with various kinds of nooses, and being killed with iron clubs, are crying here. Those sinful men who oppose good men and brāhmaṇas in this world are roasted here after their necks etc. are seized by Yama's servants. This also is a hell having six divisions like Vadha, etc. See this fifth hell called Kūṭaśālmalī, where, O brāhmaṇa, there are śālmalī and other trees resembling charcoal, where those men who are always engaged in adultery, snatching others' wealth and treachery, are roasted cruelly in six ways. See this sixth wonderful hell (called) Raktapūya where men committing sins are roasted with their faces turned down. These have eaten prohibited articles, and were engaged in censuring others and wickedness. Being pierced and killed, they are crying in fearful tones. This also is having bad smells of six kinds. O Dhaneśvara, see this seventh hell appearing fierce and called Kumbhīpāka. It is divided into six by means of articles like oil. Here great sinners are, for many thousand years, boiled by plunging them and taking them out (of the oil) by Yama's servants. These Raurava hells are said to be forty plus two. See them. A non-deliberate sin is called *śuṣka*, and a deliberate one *ārdra*. The hells are of two kinds depending upon the two varieties, ārdra and śuṣka. They have eightyfour separate divisions. That which is of a non-specific or general nature, resulting in a person's not being allowed to dine in the same line, and arising from pollution, and

resulting in one's exclusion from his caste is said to be a minor sin.

25-26. A very heinous sin[1] is a major sin said to be divided into seven divisions. One by one they are roasted in these seven (hells). Due to your collection of religious merit as you had contact with the observers of the Kārtika-vow, you were taken out of them.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

27-29. Thus showing him the hells, the official looking after the dead, took Dhaneśvara to the Yakṣa-world; then he lived there. He is the follower of Kubera, and is known as Dhanayakṣa, and after him Viśvāmitra has fashioned a holy place at Ayodhyā. This Kārtika-vow is having such an efficacy, gives pleasures and salvation. By seeing an observer of this vow even he who has committed many sins, gets salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN

Aśvattha and Vaṭa Praised as Gods in Disguise

Sūta said

1-4. Speaking like this to Satyabhāmā, very dear to him, Vāsudeva went to his mother's house to offer evening prayer, etc. This Kārtika is said to be powerful like this, destroying sins, always making one dear to Viṣṇu and always giving pleasures and salvation. Keeping awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu, bathing in the morning, using Tulasī (leaves etc.), concluding the vow, and offering light—these are the vows (to be observed) in Kārtika. The Kārtika-vow is complete with these five vows. The fruit that one gets is said to be pleasures and salvation.

The sages said:

5-7. O Raumaharṣaṇa, this religious act of Kārtika is said

---

1. Mahāpāpa—a great, or heinous sin. Murder of a brāhmaṇa, drinking liquor, stealing, violating the preceptor's bed (i.e. his wife), and company of those who commit these sins are great sins.

to be dear to Viṣṇu, giving great fruit, properly purifying and destroying sins. When it comes, it should be necessarily observed duly by men desiring salvation, or desiring enjoyments. If this is so, how should a man observing a vow, who is in a difficulty, who is in an impervious forest, or is suffering from diseases, observe the auspicious Kārtika vow?

Sūta said:

8-20. O best sages, listen. I shall tell all about it as to how it should be observed, since it is extremely fruitful. In a temple of Viṣṇu or Śiva, or in any other temple in the absence of a temple of Viṣṇu or Śiva, a man should keep awake (in honour) of Viṣṇu. If a man is in an impervious forest to which he might have gone by day, he should observe it under the root of an Aśvattha tree or even in Tulasī-groves. A man, by singing (songs) mainly containing Viṣṇu's names, near Viṣṇu, obtains the fruit of presenting a thousand cows. A man playing upon a musical instrument will obtain the fruit of a Vājapeya (sacrifice), and a dancer that of bathing at all holy places. A man who gives wealth will obtain all this religious merit of them. He would get one-sixth portion by praising and seeing (the deity). O (sages), if one who is in a calamity, does not get a watery (place) for bathing, or one is diseased, he should purify himself with (the recital of) the names of Viṣṇu. He who after observing the vow is unable to conclude it (duly), should, according to his capacity, feed brāhmaṇas for the (proper) completion of the vow. Since it gives great fruit, it should never be abandoned by men. Brāhmaṇas are the form of Viṣṇu whose form is not manifest on the earth. By their being pleased he is well pleased on the earth. If he is not able to present a lamp, he should light others' lamps. Or he should carefully protect them from wind etc. In the absence of Tulasī he should worship a brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, since Viṣṇu is always present in his devotees. In the absence of all (this) the observer of the vow should serve brāhmaṇas, cows and worship Aśvattha and Vaṭa trees for the completion of the vow.

The sages said:

21. How do you equate Aśvattha and Vaṭa trees with a cow

and a brāhmaṇa? How do you take them to be more venerable than all (other) trees?

Sūta said:

22-23. There is no doubt that lord Viṣṇu is of the form of Aśvattha, Vaṭa is Rudra's form, and Palāśa has taken up Brahmā's form. Seeing, worshipping and serving them is said to remove sins. These certainly destroy grief, diseases and the wicked.

The sages said:

24. O you omniscient one, tell (us) how Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva became trees. We have a great doubt about it.

Sūta said:

25-26. Formerly, it is said, gods sent Agni in a brāhmaṇa's form to create an obstacle when Śiva and Pārvatī were cohabiting. Then that Pārvatī, trembling and angry due to being deprived of the sexual pleasure, angrily cursed the gods.

Pārvatī said:

27-29. Even these worms and insects know the sexual pleasure. O gods, you will obtain the condition of plants due to having obstructed it.

Thus that Pārvatī of an angry mind, cursed the gods. Therefore, all hosts of gods have become trees. Therefore, O chief sages, both these Viṣṇu and Śiva have become Aśvattha and Vaṭa (trees). Aśvattha has become fit to be touched on a Saturday and not fit to be touched (on other days) due to contact of Śani with Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTEEN

Alakṣmī's Episode

The sages said:

1. O Sūta, how has this Aśvattha tree become untouchable, and similarly how has it become fit to be touched on a Saturday? Please tell us all this in detail.

Sūta said:

2-3. Out of the gems that the lordly gods obtained after churning the ocean, the gods gave Lakṣmī and Kaustubha to Viṣṇu. When he accepted Lakṣmī as his wife, she respectfully said to him having the disc in his hand.

Lakṣmī said:

4-5. How will you marry me, the younger one, without getting this elder one married? Therefore, O Viṣṇu, having first married this Alakṣmī, my elder sister, take me. This is an old practice.

Sūta said:

6-10a. Hearing these words of her, Viṣṇu, the creator of the world, gave according to his own words, to sage Uddālaka who had practised penance for a very long time, that Alakṣmī, of a big face, white teeth, having a bright body, tall, having red eyes, and having rough and tawny hair. That sage, in accordance with Viṣṇu's words, accepted her and he, knowing Dharma, brought her to his hermitage full of sounds of (the recital of) the Vedas, rich with the fragrance of sacrificial fire, and resounding with the sounds of (the recitals of) lores. Seeing that hermitage, she who was afflicted, said these words:

Jyeṣṭhā said:

10b. This abode full of Vedic sounds is not proper for me. O brāhmaṇa, I shall not come here. Take me somewhere else. Do not delay.

Uddālaka said:

11. Why do you not come? What is here that you don't

like? Tell me at which place an abode proper for you would be (found).

Jyeṣṭhā said:

12-15. I shall not stay there where the sound of (the recital of) the Vedas is heard, guests are honoured, and sacrifices etc. are (performed). So also I shall not stay there where a pair of lovers live, and where the dead ancestors are honoured. I love a place where there are men engaged in gambling and taking away others' wealth, and where there live adulterers. I am interested in that place where cow slaughter takes place, drinking is indulged in, so also where sins like the killing of a brāhmaṇa take place.

Sūta said:

16-17. Hearing these words of her, sage Uddālaka's face was dejected; and recollecting Viṣṇu's words, he did not say (anything). He went here and there. Seeing his worship she said, "I will not come". Then through confusion, he too became very much afflicted. Then Uddālaka spoke these words to that Alakṣmī:

Uddālaka said:

18. O Alakṣmī, stay for a moment at the root of this Aśvattha tree till I return after finding a place for (our) stay.

Sūta said:

19-21. Thus keeping her there, Uddālaka went (away). When she who was waiting for him for a long time did not see him, she, afflicted due to being forsaken by her husband, wept piteously. Lakṣmī, in her abode in Vaikuṇṭha heard her weeping there. Then with her mind dejected, she respectfully said to Viṣṇu:

Lakṣmī said:

22. O lord, O kind one, my elder sister is afflicted due to being forsaken by her husband. If I am dear to you, then go to console her.

Sūta said:

23. Then Viṣṇu, full of compassion, came there with Lakṣmī, consoled that Alakṣmī, and said these words to her:

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

24-25. O Alakṣmī, being in possession of this Aśvattha tree, be stable. I have made from my portion this abode for you. May this younger sister of you be stable with those householders who everyday worship you, the elder one.

Sūta said:

26-28. Those who listen to and recite this (account of) the greatness of Kārtika, would live in Viṣṇu's city till the final deluge. There is on the earth no other (vow) than that of Kārtika, dear to Viṣṇu, which removes diseases, which destroys sins, which is a great giver of intelligence, which is a means of getting sons, wealth etc., which is the cause of salvation. What is the use (the need) for going to and resorting to holy places for the man who, with restraints, observes the Kārtika vow which is dear to Viṣṇu, which destroys all sins, which brings about prosperity in the form of good sons and grandsons, wealth and grains?

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEEN

The Importance of Bathing in Kārtika

Sūta said:

1. Hearing all these words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that noble Satyā, daughter of Satrājit, then said:

Satyā said:

2. O lord, I have not heard the greatness of Kārtika in detail. How is Kārtika (said to be) the best of all months?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

3. You have well asked with respect about the vow of Kārtika. It was formerly told to Śaunaka by very noble Sūta.

Sūta said:

4. Listen, I shall give the auspicious answer to this question. Formerly the lord told it to Kārtikeya who had asked about it.

Kārtikeya said:

5-15. O lord, I, a devotee of Viṣṇu, have heard many secrets of Viṣṇu told by you. Men have come to the ocean of mundane existence, covered with large waves of unhappiness. Carefully tell (some story) for their emancipation. So also, O you best among speakers, tell about the rite of Kārtika and the bath (in it), by which men will cross over the ocean of unhappiness, O father. Tell me about the greatness of illumination, of offering mango-sprouts, O you of a good vow, and the greatness of gopīcandana and Tulasī, O lord. Tell me also about the greatness of jasmine flowers; so also of lotuses; so also tell about the greatness of dhātrī-fruits and damanaka. O lord, tell about the greatness of ketakī-flowers; so also of the offering of eatables, the greatness of a holy place, and the fruit of the bath in Māgha. O best god, tell about the fruit of eating from palāśa-leaves, the fruit of waving the light by setting right the wick of another's lamp, O Śiva. (Tell me about) the greatness of the holy place (called) Puṣkara, so also of Śūkara, O lord; so also the greatnecs of Śālagrāma, and the arrangement of the Svastika (symbol). Tell me also about the fruit of gifts, avoiding others' food, the fruit of the fast for a month, and of giving away a couch. O you of a good vow, (tell me) about the greatness of Dīpāvalī, and of the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī); so also tell me in detail the importance of the five days from the eleventh to the fifteenth of the bright half of the month of Kārtika.

The lord said:

16-21. O child, you have asked well for emancipating the people. I shall undoubtedly tell it. There is no other Viṣṇu devotee

like you. O child, there is no doubt that I am emancipated by a good son (like) you. You always have a firm devotion to Viṣṇu. The best brāhmaṇa who gives (i.e. tells) the Vaiṣṇava practice to people gets the religious merit obtained by giving the earth with the ocean. That is not equal even to a croreth part of (the merit got from the vow of) Kārtika. On one side are all gifts, gifts of cows, all sacrifices with presents, the residence at Puṣkara, Kurukṣetra, Himālaya, the residence at the holy place of Mathurā, at Vārāṇasī, at Śūkara, and on the other side is Kārtika always dear to Viṣṇu, O child.

Sūta said:

22. Speaking like this, O best sage, Śiva again spoke these words: "I shall tell you in great detail the importance of bathing (daily) in (the month of) Kārtika".

The lord said:

23-32. The Kṛta age is said to be of brāhmaṇas, the Tretā age is said to be that of kṣatriyas, Dvāpara is said to be of vaiśyas and Kali is said to be of Śūdras. O child, people show slackness in taking a bath in the Kali age. Yet I shall tell you about the bath in Kārtika and Māgha. A man whose hands, feet, speech, mind are controlled, and who has knowledge, penance and fame (to his credit) enjoys the fruit of (the visits to) a holy place. These five—one having no faith, a sinful person, an atheist, one with a split mind, and a disputant—do not enjoy the fruit of (the visit to) a holy place. That brāhmaṇa who, getting up in the morning, would always bathe in a holy place, is free from all sins, and obtains (i. e. goes to) the highest Brahman. O Kārtikeya, those who know about a bath, have said that a bath is of four kinds: Vāyavya, Vāruṇa, Divya and Brāhmya. A bath in the evening is Vāyavya; a bath in a sea etc. is Vāruṇa; a bath with hymns recited by brāhmaṇas is Brāhmya; and a divine bath is the one bright with the water (directly falling) from the clouds. Of all the baths Vāruṇa is the best. A brāhmaṇa, a kṣatriya, a vaiśya should take a bath with the (recital of) hymns. O Kārtikeya, a śūdra, so also women, should bathe silently. A girl, a young women, an old woman, a man, a woman, a eunuch are free from all sins due to

a bath (everyday) in Kārtika and Māgha. Having bathed in Kārtika, they obtain the desired fruit.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEEN

Śiva Answers Kārtikeya's Queries

Sūta said:

1. Having approached the listener, viz. Kārtikeya, full of devotion, the bull-bannered lord Śiva spoke again.

The lord said:

2-15. Kārtika is Viṣṇu's month and the best of all months. In the Kali age all the thirtythree gods come together in this month. In the very prosperous month of Kārtika men will give to a brāhmaṇa a cow, gold, silver, land, residence, cows with full devotion, O you of a good vow. Of all gifts the gift of a daughter is the best. Men will duly give their daughter to a brāhmaṇa of the Atri-family. They (will) live in Vaikuṇṭha as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). When small hair appears (on the private parts), Soma enjoys a daughter. When she attains puberty, gandharvas (enjoy her); and when the breasts appear (prominent), Fire (enjoys her). A man should marry his daughter as long as she has not attained puberty. Wise men recommend a girl's marriage when she is eight years old. She should be duly given to a brāhmaṇa who is well-versed in sacred learning, possesses moral virtue, has actually studied the Vedas, and has observed celibacy. This is said to be the rule regarding a daughter to be given (in marriage). He is honoured in Rudra's heaven for as many thousand years as the number of hair on the daughter's body. (The gift of) a thousand cows is equal to that of ten bulls. (The gift of) a vehicle is equal to that of ten bulls. (The gift of) a horse is equal to that of ten vehicles. The gift of an elephant is superior to the gift of thousands of horses. The gift of gold is equal to the gift of thousands of elephants. Giving knowledge is equal to the gift

of thousands of bhāras of gold. The gift of (a piece of) land is a crorefold superior to giving knowledge. The gift of cows is superior to thousands of gifts of land. Giving food is superior to thousands of gifts of cows. All this immobile and mobile world has food as its support. Therefore, O Kārtikeya, one should with an effort (i.e. should make an effort to) give (gifts) in Kārtika. (These) three are equal gifts, and have equal fruits—a cow fulfilling all desires, earth (i.e. land) and Sarasvatī (i.e. knowledge).

Kārtikeya said:

16. O great god, please tell me other (religious) practices doing which one having got rid of all (one's) sins, would be a god.

Sūta said:

17. O you treasures of penance, what is the use of praising it in many ways? Thus asked Śiva again commenced speaking:

The lord said:

18-46. He who, observing restraints, avoids others' food in Kārtika, gets the fruit of the Cāndrāyaṇa (vow). The man who, noticing that Kārtika has arrived, would avoid others' food day by day, obtains the fruit of the Kṛcchra vow. A man should avoid oil in Kārtika; a man should avoid honey in Kārtika; one should avoid (the use of) bell-metal in Kārtika; and one should especially avoid food prepared for a group. By eating flesh (but) once (in Kārtika) he obtains (i.e. goes to) a demonish stock and is cooked in feces for sixty thousand years. Freed from that the sinner is born as a village-pig eating feces. When foods (generally) indulged in are restricted in Kārtika (by a man), he surely obtains Viṣṇu's form and a position giving salvation. There is no (other) month like Kārtika and no deity superior to Viṣṇu. There is no (other) sacred knowledge like the Vedas; there is no (other) holy place like Gaṅgā; there is no (other) practice like (that of) truth; there is no (other) age like the Kṛta (age). There is no (other) satisfaction like that of the tongue; there is no (other) pleasure like that due to giving gifts. There is no (other) friend like righteousness; there is no (other) luminary

like the eyes. He who would spend (Kārtika), the month dear to Viṣṇu, without (observing) a vow, should be known to have fallen from duty and he is born in low stocks. Kārtika is the best month, always dear to Viṣṇu's devotees. A holy river flowing into the sea is difficult to be had for a bath by those given to bathing (everyday). An unmarried girl belonging to a noble family and of good character is difficult to be found. A couple of human beings (of an amiable nature) is difficult to be found. In the world a (good) mother and especially a (good) father are difficult to be found. Honour to the good is rare. A virtuous son is rare. Residence at Dvārakā is difficult to be accomplished. Kṛṣṇa's sight is difficult to be had. A bath in Gomatī is had with difficulty. The Kārtika vow is difficult to be had. O child, the fruit that a man gets by giving (pieces of) land to brāhmaṇas at (the time of) lunar and solar eclipses is had by one who sleeps on the (bare) ground. He should feed a brāhmaṇa couple and should honour them with unguents. Blankets, gems, various garments, mattresses filled with cotton should be given along with bed-sheets. Give a pair of sandals or an umbrella in the purifying (month of) Kārtika. He who everyday eats from leaves in Kārtika, does not meet with a calamity as long as the fourteen Indras are ruling. He gets the fruit of all his desires, and would get the fruit of (visiting) all holy places. By eating from palāśa leaves a man does not see (i.e. have) a residence in hell, since this palāśa is actually known to be Brahmā granting all desired objects. O Kārtikeya, in Kārtika (a man) should avoid the middle (palāśa) leaf. In the three leaves (of palāśa), Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva (reside). He should avoid the divine leaf, (since) Brahmā is excellent Viṣṇu (*obscure*). By eating from the remaining leaves he obtains all religious merit. O best sage, by eating from the middle leaf (of palāśa) and by drinking the milk of a tawny cow a man would go to hell. A śūdra who ignorantly drinks the milk of a tawny cow, is purified by giving a cow to a brāhmaṇa in Kārtika. Giving sesamum, bathing in a river, always seeing the good, eating from palāśa leaves in Kārtika give salvation. He who observes silence, eats from palāśa leaves, bathes with (river-) water, always forgives, sleeps on the (bare) ground in Kārtika would destroy sin earned during (many) ages, O Kārtikeya, one who keeps awake before Viṣṇu

at dawn in Kārtika, would obtain the fruit of (giving) a thousand cows. The fruit which men get by offering food in pitṛpakṣa (i.e. dark half of Bhādrapada), and by offering water in Jyeṣṭha and Āṣāḍha, is obtained by them in lighting others' lamps. By lighting another's lamp and by serving Viṣṇu's devotees in Kārtika a man gets the fruit of Rājasūya and horse sacrifices. He who does not bathe in a river, does not (tell) tale(s) of Viṣṇu, does not see Viṣṇu's devotees in Kārtika would lose the religious merit (collected during) ten years. O best sage, (the religious merit of) that wise man who would remember Puṣkara through (physical) act, mentally, or through speech, would be a lakh of crore times more.

47-60. Prayāga in the month of Māgha, Puṣkara in Kārtika, so also Avantī in Vaiśākha-month would destroy sin earned during ages. O Kārtikeya, those men are blessed especially in the Kali age, who by all means serve Viṣṇu everyday. (For him,) O sage, what is the use of having offered many piṇḍas by means of (offering) srāddhas etc.? There is no doubt that he has emancipated his dead ancestors from hell. Those who for (i.e. in honour of) their dead ancestors give a bath with milk etc. to Viṣṇu, go to heaven and live there with gods for a crore of kalpas. O best brāhmaṇa, Lakṣmī does not stay for crores of existences in the houses of them who have not worshipped the lotus-eyed Kṛṣṇa (i.e. Viṣṇu) in Kārtika. Those who have not worshipped Viṣṇu with black or white lotuses are stung, snatched, have perished and have fallen into the cave of Kali. He who (even) with one lotus worships the chief of gods, the lord of Lakṣmī, destroys sins (collected during) a myriad thousands of years. The lord of gods, saluted and worshipped with (just) one lotus would forgive seven hundred thousands of sins. O best sage, he who would worship Viṣṇu in Kārtika with a lakh of Tulasī-leaves would obtain a pearl on (i.e. for) every leaf as the fruit. Viṣṇu, O (my) son, is pleased for crores of thousands of kalpas with whatever is done (i.e. offered) after being mixed with (i.e. having) the fragrance of Tulasī. O Kārtikeya, Kali does not touch him who carries in his mouth, on his head or body a Tulasī (leaf) taken down from (the image of) Viṣṇu (after it was offered to him). O Kārtikeya, he who would sprinkle his body with the offerings like flowers after taking them down from (the image

of) Kṛṣṇa, becomes free from all diseases and sins also. O (my) son, undoubtedly the sins of him perish, and diseases of him come to an end, whose body touches (i.e. is smeared) with the remaining of the (burnt) charcoal etc. (offered) to Viṣṇu. The water in a conch, devotion to Viṣṇu, the remains of offerings like flowers, water (flowing from) the feet (of the image of Viṣṇu), sandal, the remains of incense remove (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINETEEN

In Praise of a Fast for a Month

The lord said:

1-3. O best of Viṣṇu's devotees, listen to the importance of the (daily) bath in Māgha. O you very intelligent one, there is no (other) devotee of Viṣṇu like you in this world. A man gets that fruit by a (daily) bath in Māgha, which he gets on seeing Viṣṇu at Cakratīrtha or Mathurā. He who, with his senses conquered, with his mind tranquil, and endowed with moral conduct, bathes (everyday) in Māgha, does not again come to this mundane existence.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

4. To you I shall tell about the greatness of (the holy place called) Śūkara, by merely knowing which (a man would) always have my proximity.

Sūta said:

5. Saying so, lord Kṛṣṇa spoke to Satyā in many ways. I shall tell it (to you). O you (sages) having penance as your treasure; listen to it.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

6-13. A being, even a donkey, that lives in Viṣṇu's temple at Śūkara extended over five yojanas, becomes the Four-armed

(Viṣṇu). The measure of Śūkara is laid down to be three thousand cubits, three hundred cubits and three. O goddess, a man gets that fruit in half a watch (i.e. three hours), (which he would get when) he practises penance for sixty thousand years at another place. The (same) fruit is said (to be obtained) by tulāpuruṣa dāna[1] in Kurukṣetra when the Sun is seized by Rāhu. It is said to be tenfold in Kāśī, and would be hundredfold in Veṇī, and said to be thousandfold at the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean. It is said to be endless in Viṣṇu's temple at Śūkara. A man gives duly a lakh (of gifts) at another place. (The fruit) would be similar by giving one only at Śūkara. By bathing but once at Śūkara, in Veṇī, and at the confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean, a man removes (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Alarka formerly got (the kingdom of) the earth with the seven islands after hearing the greatness of Śūkara, O Kārtikeya. (O son, go there on the Dvādaśī of the bright half of Mārgaśīrṣa.)

Kārtikeya said:

14-16. O lord, I desire to listen to (the description of) the best of vows; so also the proper manner and the fruit of a fast for a month. (So also I desire to hear) how it should be observed by men, what would be (the way of) observing the vow, (how) it is duly commenced and duly completed. O Maheśvara, tell me in detail how many times this vow, giving happiness and wealth, is to be observed, O sinless one.

Śrī Rudra said:

17-29. O Kārtikeya, since you have asked all this with devotion, listen to me explaining it, O best among the intelligent. As Viṣṇu is the greatest of the gods, as the Sun is the greatest of the luminaries, as Meru is (the greatest) of the mountains, as Garuḍa is the greatest among the birds, as Gaṅgā is (the greatest) of the holy places, as vaiśya is (the greatest) of the subjects, similarly observing the fast for a month is the greatest among the vows. He who observes the fast for a month

---

1. Tulāpuruṣa—Gift to a brāhmaṇa of as much gold or silver as equals the weight of one's body.

would obtain the religious merit due to all vows, all holy places and gifts. A man does not get that religious merit by means of various sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma in which many presents are given as he gets by observing the fast for a month. That man who observes the fast for a month according to the rule has (indeed) muttered (hymns), has offered oblations (into fire), has given (gifts), has observed penance, has made oblations to his dead ancestors. Dedicating a sacrifice to me, Viṣṇu, and worshipping me, and then receiving an order from his preceptor he should observe the fast for a month. Having observed all vows (in honour) of Viṣṇu and observed the auspicious (vow) of Dvādaśī etc. he should observe the fast for a month. O brāhmaṇa, after having observed the vows like Atikṛcchra, Pāraka,[1] and Cāndrāyaṇa he should fast for a month by the order of his preceptor. Having observed a fast on the Ekādaśī of the bright half of Āśvina, he should take up this vow for thirty days. A man who worships Viṣṇu and fasts for the entire month of Kārtika would enjoy the fruit in the form of salvation. In the temple of Viṣṇu he should three times a day devoutly worship Viṣṇu with the fragrant flowers of mālatī (jasmine), blue lotuses, arka flowers, lotuses, (other) flowers, uśīra-roots, camphor etc. and with the offerings of eatables, cakes, lights etc. after smearing (the lord's image) with excellent sandal.

30-43. A man, a woman or a widow, having great devotion and with his/her senses conquered, should worship the Garuḍa-bannered god (Viṣṇu) with mind, deeds and words and should day and night utter the names of Viṣṇu. He should devoutly and without false words utter Viṣṇu's praise. Full of compassion for all beings, of a tranquil temperament, harmless, sleeping and sitting on a seat outside he should narrate (the praise of) Viṣṇu. He should avoid recollection, sight, enjoying fragrant articles and talking of food, and should give up (taking) morsels. He should avoid smearing his body with oil, smearing his head with oil, (chewing) tāmbūla, smearing his body when he is observing the vow, and should avoid everything that is prohibited. While observing the vow he should not touch any-

1. Pāraka—Name of a vow of religious penance said to consist in fasting for twelve days and nights, keeping the mind attentive and organs subdued.

thing and should not disturb anyone doing a deed. A householder, remaining in a temple, should certainly observe the vow. A man, a good woman or a widow, having duly observed the fast for a month, should worship Viṣṇu properly. With his mind controlled and senses conquered, he should observe this vow without anything wanting or adding for thirty days and should observe the fast for a month, and then on the Dvādaśī (day) he should worship the auspicious Garuḍa-bannered (god). He should worship him with garlands of flowers, sandal, incense, and by besmearing (his image). A man should please Viṣṇu with clothes, ornaments and (by playing upon) musical instruments. With water (from) holy (places mixed) with sandal he should devoutly bathe (the image of) Viṣṇu. He should (worship) the image besmeared with sandal and adorned with incense and flowers. Having fed best brāhmaṇas (and pleased them) with gifts of garments etc. he should give them dakṣiṇā (i.e. presents), and saluting them he should apologise to them. Having thus fasted for a month, and having worshipped Viṣṇu, and having fed the brāhmaṇas, he is honoured in Viṣṇu's heaven. Thus he should engage thirteen brāhmaṇas. Listen to the manner in which he should dismiss them at the end of the fast for a month. Fasting on the Ekādaśī day he should perform a sacrifice (in honour) of Viṣṇu.

44-53. Having with the permission of his preceptor worshipped the lord of gods, he should, according to his capacity, worship the preceptor. Then saluting the brāhmaṇas of a pure family and character and devoted to Viṣṇu's worship, he should feed them. Then he should honour them all. Having fed thirteen brāhmaṇas, he should salute and honour the best brāhmaṇas with tāmbūla, pairs of garments, food coverings, yogapaṭṭas, threads, sacred threads, and then he should get fashioned a bed furnished with a cover, well-covered, beautiful, excellent, with pillows and decorated. Then, having according to his capacity got fashioned his golden image, he should put it on the bed after worshipping it with garlands etc. On the bed he should put a seat, wooden sandals, an umbrella, a pair of garments and shoes, and pure flowers. Having thus made the bed, and having saluted those brāhmaṇas, he should request the brāhmaṇas for their consent and say: "I am going to Viṣṇu's

world." Then the best man would go to Viṣṇu's healthy abode. He should repeatedly say to the brāhmaṇas seated in the pavilion: "O best brāhmaṇas, may all that is without the (proper) hymns and (proper) acts, be fully accomplished due to the favour of your words." I have (thus) properly told (you) the manner of (observing) the vow of the fast for a month.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTY

The Greatness of Śālagrāma

Sūta said:

1. Hearing these words, Kārtikeya again asked about the worship of Śālagrāma. O you having penance as your wealth, listen to it again.

Kārtikeya said:

2. O lord, O greatest among the meditating saints, I have heard about all religious practices. O lord, tell me in detail about the worship of Śālagrāma.

The lord said:

3-23. Well, well, I shall tell you what you ask, O you very intelligent one; O dear to me, listen to it. O you noble-hearted Kārtikeya, on a Śālagrāma stone the three worlds with the mobile and immobile always stay together. He who has seen, saluted, bathed and worshipped it, would get religious merit as the fruit, a crorefold more, of sacrifices, and that of the gift of a crore of cows. O child, he who has always drunk the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's Śālagrāma, has cut off the very tormenting stay in the embryo. O son, even he, always attached to passion and without devotion, would become Viṣṇu after worshipping a Śālagrāma stone. The round Śālagrāma stone, when remembered, glorified, meditated upon, worshipped and saluted, destroys a crore (of sins). As the herds of beasts in a forest go (away) through fear on seeing a lion, so sins in large numbers go

(away) on seeing a Śālagrāma stone. A man saluting with or without devotion a Śālagrāma stone at the time of its worship would obtain salvation. A man who everyday worships the Śālagrāma stone, has no fear of Yama, so also of death and birth. A man who, in the Kali age greatly devoted, everyday worships the Śālagrāma stone with sandal, water for washing the feet, respectful offerings, offerings of eatables, lights, incenses, unguents, songs, musical instruments and hymns, enjoys for thousands of crores of kalpas in the abode of Viṣṇu. How can those men, my devotees on the earth, have manhood (i.e. birth as a human being) who have devoutly saluted Śālagrāma? Those of my devotees, the most sinful ones, who do not salute my lord, Viṣṇu, are not my devotees, being deluded by sins. Even he, being my devotee, who eats on the Ekādaśī day, harms me, and goes to the Andhatāmisra hell. One should touch my (symbol, the) Phallus. No other purification is told for him. That day which is dear to Viṣṇu, is dear to me. That mortal who would not fast on that day, is a sinner and worse than a cāṇḍāla. O son, I always live in the Śālagrāma stone. The god, being pleased, has given me that place. That fruit which is obtained by worshipping me with thousands of lotuses is obtained, a crore times more, by worshipping a Śālagrāma stone. Those men who have not worshipped a Śālagrāma stone in the mortal world, have not worshipped and saluted me. O Kārtikeya, he who worships me before a Śālagrāma stone, has worshipped me for twentyone yugas. What is the use of worshipping hundreds of Liṅgas (i.e. my symbols) without devotion to Viṣṇu? If the round Śālagrāma stone is not worshipped, then, O son, offerings of eatables, leaves, flowers, fruits, water, offered to me, is not fit.

24-51a. Everything in front of a Śālagrāma stone is purified. A man eating the eatables offered to another deity would observe the Cāndrāyaṇa(-vow, i.e. would get its fruit). (But) by eating the eatables offered to Viṣṇu, he would obtain the fruit of a crore of sacrifices. There is no doubt that by means of the water flowing from the feet of god (Viṣṇu), so also by means of the water in a conch, (men) having committed a crore of murders are purified. He who being a devotee of Śiva, would not honour a devotee of Viṣṇu, so also his hater, goes to (and lives

in) hell as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). He in whose house a householder rests for a while, drinks nectar for eight ages of Brahmā. Mean men, avoiding Kṛṣṇa's worship, perish in the painful forest of the mundane existence for thousands of crores of years. By means of worshipping the Liṅgas coming up from Śālagrāma stones, through love, men devoid of Sāṁkhya or Yoga, obtain salvation. That fruit which would be got by seeing crores of my Liṅgas, worshipping or eulogising them, would be (obtained) (just) on (worshipping) the Śālagrāma stone. There are twelve stones coming up (i.e. formed) from the Śālagrāma. Listen to the religious merit of him who worships them daily. The religious merit (obtained by) worshipping thousands of crores of Liṅgas on the bank of Jāhnavī, by living for eight yugas at Kāśī, would be had in one day (by worshipping the Śālagrāma). Then (what would be the religious merit) of a man who would worship it for many (days)? I or deities like Brahmā do not endeavour to measure it. Therefore, O son, my devotees should do devoutly, to please me, the worship of a Śālagrāma stone. At that place where Viṣṇu in the form of a Śālagrāma stone lives, live gods, demons, yakṣas, and the fourteen worlds. That fruit which a man would get by means of all the crores of recitals (of the names) of deities, would be got by the good deed, viz. recital (of the names) of Viṣṇu, in the Kali age. His dead ancestors once gratified with a piṇḍa in front of the Śālagrāma stone live (in Vaikuṇṭha). They cannot be counted. For those men who devoutly drink the water dropping from the Śālagrāma stone, what is the use of drinking thousands of the pañcagavyas (i.e. the five products obtained from a cow)? When an expiation has succeeded after having drunk the water (flowing) from Viṣṇu's feet, what is the use of (giving) gifts, observing fasts, and properly practising Cāndrāyaṇa vows? What is the use of worshipping crores of other deities for him who fashions an image of Viṣṇu lying in water in a tank? They say 'Gods have Viṣṇu as their chief'. O son, for the fruit of every religious act, there is a limit. (But) there is absolutely no measure of the fruit of the worship of the Śālagrāma stone. He who gives a stone of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu originating from Śālagrāma to a brāhmaṇa, a devotee of Viṣṇu, has performed hundreds of sacrifices. Even though he stays at

home, he has everyday bathed in Gaṅgā. He has bathed at all holy places, and is initiated for all sacrifices. One should do sprinkling with water flowing from a Śālagrāma stone. O Kārtikeya, there are stones in heaven, in the mortal world, and in the nether world. But there is no (other) stone like the Śālagrāma stone. The life of him in the world of human beings, difficult to obtain, who everyday gives a prastha of sesamum is fruitful. He gets that fruit by worshipping a Śālagrāma stone. A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, a root or so also a blade of dūrvā offered to the Śālagrāma become equal to Meru. A man may be without a rite or having no (religious) act or hymns; but if he has a mark of the disc on his arm, he gets the proper fruit as is told in the sacred texts. All that I have seen in Viṣṇu as destroying affliction, I shall tell you, O son. "O Viṣṇu, where do you stay? What is your prop? What is your resort? O god, how are (can) you (be) pleased? Tell me all that."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

51b-73. O Śiva, I always stay in the stone produced in Śālagrāma. Listen to my names which are there on the chariot-wheel mark. If on the wheel resembling an opening, there is no hole, then that should be known as Viṣṇu, pure and very handsome. That which has a long size, a cavity and many holes, is Pradyumna, having the Sun's face and of bright lustre. Aniruddha has a yellow lustre, is round and very beautiful, is marked with three lines at the opening, and has a mark of a lotus. God Nārāyaṇa is dark, has a raised wheel of the navel, has long lines, and has a cavity on the right side. One should know that a stone having an opening above, and beautiful, is of the form of Viṣṇu, giving desired objects, salvation, and especially wealth. The highest lord has a white lustre and is endowed with a lotus and a disc. On its surface are a round figure and very many holes. Similarly Viṣṇu is of a dark complexion on the basic, very beautiful disc (like figure). Similarly on the opening, in the middle part, a line is noticed. Kapila, Narasiṁha has a large disc and is very beautiful. He should be worshipped with celibacy; otherwise he creates difficulties. Varāha has strength as his symbol, the two discs are said to be uneven. He resembles a sapphire, has three lines, and is beautiful from (i.e. due to) the

navel. That stone which is long, has a golden complexion, and adorned with three lines, is known as 'Matsya', and gives the fruit like enjoyments and salvation. Similarly Kūrma is raised, round on the surface, and is filled with a disc (like figure). Marked with Kaustubha, it has a green colour. Hayagrīva has the shape of a horse, and is adorned with five lines, is full of many marks, and on the surface has a blue sign. Vaikuṇṭha has an undivided body, and has mark of a disc and a banner. Similarly on the hole there is a very beautiful line, of the shape of a guñja-fruit. Similarly god Śrīdhara is marked with a garland of wood-flowers; has the form of a kadamba flower, and is adorned with a group of five lines. The round and small one is called Vāmana. It is like the atasī flower, and is adorned with a mark. Similarly the handsome god is dark-complexioned and very lustrous. On its left side there are a mace and a disc, and on the right side of it there is a line. Similarly Dāmodara is big; in its centre is a disc. It resembles dūrvā, is crowded with openings, and has yellow lines. Ananta has many colours, and is marked with various circuits. It is of various forms, and grants all desired objects. He whose face is seen in all quarters and intermediate quarters and above, should be known as Puruṣottama who grants the fruit in the form of pleasures and salvation. That whose Liṅga is seen on the top of a stone coming up from Śālagrāma, is god Yogeśvara (i.e. the lord of abstract meditation), and removes (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder. Padmanābha is reddish. A lotus is in contact with his face. Due to worshipping him daily a poor man would become rich.

74-83. One should point out one that is marked with a disc, having a golden body, and a collection of rays, full of many golden lines, and adorned with crystal-lustre. A very glossy (stone) gives success; a black one gives fame; a white one burns sins, and gives a father long life and sons. A dark blue one gives wealth; a red one diseases; a rough one gives dejection; and a crooked one causes poverty. One (disc on a stone) should be known to be the Sudarśana; the second (i.e. having two discs) the couple Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa. One should know the third one (i.e. having three discs) to be Acyuta; the fourth one (i.e. having four discs) to be Janārdana; the fifth one (having five discs) to be Vāsudeva; and the sixth one (having

six discs) to be Pradyumna; the seventh (having seven discs) to be Saṁkarṣaṇa; the eighth one (having eight discs) to be Puruṣottama; the ninth one (having nine discs) to be the nine modes; the tenth one (having ten discs) of his own nature; the eleventh (having eleven discs) to be Aniruddha; and the twelfth one (having twelve discs) is of the twelve forms. Discs more than these are seen on the stone called Ananta. A broken, cut or broken Śālagrāma does not have a flaw. He should carefully worship that image which is liked by him. He who carries the lord of stones after placing him on his shoulder, would subjugate the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. Viṣṇu resides there where there is the Śālagrāma stone. The gift (given) there or the muttering of hymn or bathing done there is hundred times superior to that at Vārāṇasī, Kurukṣetra, Prayāga, Naimiṣa and Puṣkara.

84-92. The religious merit there is a crore times more. It gives great fruit at Vārāṇasī. All (such) sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa that a man commits, are quickly burnt by the worship of Śālagrāma stone. Where there is the deity coming from Śālagrāma stone, and where there is the (deity) from Dvārāvatī, and where there is the union of the two, there is salvation. There is no doubt about this. Celibates, householders, recluses and mendicants should eat the eatables offered to Viṣṇu. No doubt should be raised about it. For its worship no hymns, no muttering, no faith are (necessary). For the worship of a Śālagrāma stone, no eulogy, no formality is needed. The auspicious circle drawn before a Śālagrāma stone, especially (the one drawn) in Kārtika purifies the family up to the seventh (descendant). He who would draw an auspicious circle even of a size of an atom before (the image of) Viṣṇu, with clay or metal-products, and he who observes the worship of the sacred fire for a full year, (the latter) being equivalent to drawing an auspicious circle in Kārtika, come to me. The sin due to cohabiting with a woman not fit to be approached, due to eating what is prohibited, perishes by means of decorating Viṣṇu's temple. That woman who draws an auspicious circle before (the image of) Viṣṇu everyday, never obtains widowhood for seven existences.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYONE

The Importance of Offering Lights etc.

The Lord said:

1-25a. O Kārtikeya, of him who, resorting to the shade of dhātrī, offers piṇḍas, the dead ancestors obtain salvation through Viṣṇu's grace. O child, a man who, being adorned with dhātrī-fruits, holds a dhātrī fruit on his head, in his hand, mouth, on his body, and who eats dhātrī-fruits becomes Viṣṇu. O Kārtikeya, he, the devotee of Viṣṇu, who has a dhātrī-fruit, becomes dear to gods; then what to say of human beings? A man should not abandon a Tulasī-garland and especially a dhātrī-garland. As long as the dhātrī-garland remains round the neck of a man, Viṣṇu, till that time, remains in his body. The life of him in whose house these three, viz. dhātrī-fruit, Tulasī, and clay from Dvārakā are (found), is fruitful. A man would live in Vaikuṇṭha for as many thousands of yugas as the days he wears a dhātrī-garland in the Kali age. He who would wear a pair of garlands of dhātrī and Tulasī round his neck would live in heaven for a crore of kalpas. A man who, having controlled the group of his senses, devoutly worships Śālagrāma stone, has the religious merit of a horse sacrifice in (i.e. from) each flower. As is Viṣṇu among gods, so is Tulasī among flowers. He who everyday would worship the Garuḍa-bannered god with Tulasī, becomes free from birth, grief, old age and diseases, and would obtain salvation. In case of him who has worshipped Viṣṇu in Kārtika, Viṣṇu rubs off the row of letters written by Yama. Śrīcandana with camphor, agaru sandal with saffron, so also offering ketakī flowers and lights is always dear to Viṣṇu. He who has offered ketakī flower or light in Kārtika in the Kali-age would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family, O Kārtikeya. On the days of Kārtika, offering of lotuses, Tulasī, ketakī-flowers and mango-blossoms, and lights as the fifth (should be done). O child, he who has made in Kārtika a bower with ketakī-garlands for Viṣṇu, obtains residence in heaven. Viṣṇu, the Garuḍa-bannered god, worshipped with a ketakī-flower only, is much pleased for a thousand years. O Kārtikeya, by worshipping Viṣṇu with ketakī-

flowers, one goes to Viṣṇu's auspicious and happy abode. So also having worshipped the lord of gods when Vaiśākha has come with damanaka, he obtains a fruit due to that worship, O best of sages. O brāhmaṇa, by the sight of him who worships Viṣṇu with agasti-flowers, the fire of hell perishes. O brāhmaṇa sage, Viṣṇu, pleased by penance, does not do that which, O Mahāsena, he does, when he is adorned with mango-flowers. He who, abandoning all (other) flowers, devoutly worships Viṣṇu in Kārtika with mango flowers, would obtain the fruit of a horse-sacrifice. About him who offers Viṣṇu a garland made of mango-flowers, even the lord of gods speaks good words. O Kārtikeya, the fruit which is obtained by the gift of a myriad cows, is obtained by offering (just) one mango-flower in Kārtika. As Viṣṇu is pleased with the Kaustubha gem, or with the garland of wood-flowers, so is he pleased with a Tulasī-leaf in Kārtika.

Sūta said:

25b. Seeing Kārtikeya bowing with politeness and full of devotion, Śiva, the Bull-bannered god spoke again.

The lord said:

26-37. O Kārtikeya, listen to the importance of lights in Kārtika. The dead ancestors, always surrounded by hosts of (other) dead ancestors, desire: 'A good son, devoted to his dead ancestors, will be born in our family, who will please Viṣṇu by offering lights in Kārtika'. O Kārtikeya, to him, whose lamp burns with ghee or oil, what is the use of a horse-sacrifice? He who has offered lights in Kārtika before Viṣṇu, for five days especially in the dark half, has performed all sacrifices, and has plunged into the water at a holy place. He who offers a light on these days, would eternally obtain religious merit. A female rat, having brightened the lamp offered by others, obtained the existence of human beings difficult to obtain, and got the best position. A hunter also who, going without food, worshipped the great lord on the fourteenth day, got the highest (place) and went to Viṣṇu's world. A prostitute Lilāvatī who, due to her resorting to a cāṇḍāla, caused (to burn more) a lamp lighted by others, became pure and went to the eternal heaven. A certain

cowherd who, seeing on the new-moon day the worship of Viṣṇu again and again said, "Victory (to Viṣṇu)," became the great lord of kings. Therefore, at night, after sunset, lamps should be offered in houses, all cow-pens and all abodes, temples of gods and cremation grounds and lakes. Due to its religious merit the offering of lights with ghee for a good purpose should be done for five days. The dead ancestors who were sinful and who had missed the rites (of the offering) of piṇḍas and water, get the highest salvation due to the religious merit of offering lights.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYTWO

The Celebration of Dīpāvalī

Kārtikeya said:

1-2. O lord, now tell me in particular the fruit of Dīpāvalī. Why is it celebrated? What would be its deity? O lord, tell me what should be and should not be given during the festival. What (kind of) exultation is indicated during it? What sport is mentioned?

Sūta said:

3. Hearing these words of Kārtikeya, the lord who had burnt up Cupid, said, 'Well' and laughed and said these words, O Brāhmaṇas.

Śrī Śiva said:

4-20. O Kārtikeya, on the thirteenth day of the dark half of Kārtika, a man should offer a light to Yama outside (his house). Thereby untimely death is avoided. "May the Sun's son, with Death having a noose in his hand and with his wife, be pleased due to this offering of the light" Those who are scared of sins, should necessarily bathe at moon-rise on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Kārtika. He, being careful, should bathe early in the morning on the fourteenth day pierced

(i.e. mixed) with the previous day of the dark half of Kārtika. Lakṣmī (resides) in oil and Gaṅgā in water. He who would bathe in the morning on Caturdaśī in Dīpāvalī does not see Yama's world. To destroy (i.e. to avoid) hell, he should whirl (round himself) apāmārga, tumbī, prapunnāṭa, vāhvala (twigs) while bathing. "O Apāmārga, being with a clod of furrowed land and with thorn and leaf, remove my sin, when repeatedly whirled." He should whirl over his head apāmārga and prapunnāṭa. Then with (i.e. by reciting) Yama's names, he should offer libations of water. "Salutation to Yama, Dharmarāja, Mṛtyu, Antaka, Vaivasvata, Kāla and Sarvabhūtakṣaya (Destroyer of all beings), Audumbara, Dadhna, Nīla, Parameṣṭhin, Vṛkodara, Citra, Citragupta." Having worshipped the deities, he (i.e. the king) should offer a light to Naraka. Then at the break of night he should offer pleasing lights at the temples of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva etc., and especially at apartments on the tops of the houses, sanctuaries, assembly halls, rivers, ramparts, gardens, wells, streets, pleasure-groves near houses, stables and abodes of elephants also. O Kārtikeya, having, like this, bathed in the morning on the new-moon day, and having devoutly worshipped and saluted deities and dead ancestors, and having offered the pārvaṇa śrāddha with curd, ghee, milk etc., he should feed brāhmaṇas with various kinds of food, and apologise to them. Then, O dear one, in the afternoon the king should gratify the citizens. Having chitchatted with them, honoured them he should converse with them. O Kārtikeya, for one year love is generated among those who talk. Before Viṣṇu has got up, he should awaken Lakṣmī through the women.

21-32. When a man has awakened Lakṣmī at the time of her getting up through a good woman, for one year Lakṣmī does not leave him. The haters of gods (i.e. the demons) scared of Viṣṇu obtained fearlessness from the brāhmaṇas, after knowing (that Viṣṇu) was asleep in the Milky Ocean, and Lakṣmī had resorted to the lotus. "You are the lustre, Śrī Ravi (i.e. the Sun), the Moon, the Lightning, the Golden Star; the lustre occurring in the lustre of the lamp is the lustre of all the lustres. That Lakṣmī that lives on the earth, in the cowpen on the auspicious day of Dīpāvalī in Kārtika, may grant me a boon." Śiva and Bhavānī

took to playing with dice as a sport. Lakṣmī, propitiated by Bhavānī remained in the form of a cow. Formerly Pārvatī vanquished Śiva in the game of dice, and sent him away naked. So this Śiva is unhappy. Gaurī always remains happy. He who gets victory first (passes) the year happily. When the night passes like this, and people have their eyes half-closed, Alakṣmī is driven out of the courtyard of the house by the joyful city-women by means of sounding the musical instruments and drums. In the case of a defeat (in the game of dice) opposite will be the case. On the first day, when the sun has risen, Govardhana should be worshipped in the morning and one should play the game of dice at night. Then cows should be decorated; and they should not be used to carry (loads etc.) or should not be milked. "O Govardhana, O support of the earth, O protector of Gokula, O you who were lifted by the hand of Viṣṇu, give (us) crores of cows. That Lakṣmī who remains in the form of the cow of the regents of the quarter, and that carries ghee for the sacrifice, may remove my sin. May cows stand before me. May cows be behind me. May cows be in my heart. I live among cows." Thus worship of Govardhana (should be done).

33-42. Having pleased with sincere devotion deities and good men, he should please others by giving food and (should please) the learned men by offering (i.e. speaking gentle) words. (He should please) the inmates of the harem by (giving them) garments, tāmbūlas, lights, flowers, camphor, saffron, food and eatables of superior and inferior quality. The king should please the chief of the village with gifts and vassals with wealth, and the hosts of foot soldiers good neck-ornaments and bracelets. The king should also please his ministers and his own people separately. Then having properly gratified wrestlers and actors, so also the bulls and large oxen fighting with one another and other soldiers and foot soldiers who are well-adorned being seated on a raised seat, he should see the actors, dancers and bards, and should cause to fight and roar the cows and buffaloes etc. which (he possesses). By means of sounding words (of calls) and responses he makes the cows attract their calves. Then, O Kārtikeya, he should put up a divine arch over the path in the eastern direction in the afternoon, tied to a pillar of the

fort or a tree; (it should be made) of kuśa (grass) and should have many hanging strings of flowers. Observing many horses and elephants, he should take them and bulls with cows, so also he-buffaloes and she-buffaloes furious with bells to the base of the arch. Through the best brāhmaṇas who have offered a sacrifice, he should put up the arch. Then, he, of a good vow, should make obeisance by (reciting) this hymn:

43-57. "O mārgapāli, salutation to you who give happiness to all the world." O Kārtikeya, at the base of the mārgapāli cows and great bulls go. Kings, princes and especially brāhmaṇas on crossing the mārgapāli, become free from disease and happy. Having done all this, at night he should actually worship Bali, the lord of demons, in a circle made on the ground. Having drawn, with five colours, (the picture of) Bali, the lord of demons, complete with all ornaments, accompanied by Vindhyāvali, surrounded by the demons Kūṣmāṇḍa, Maya, Jambhāru, Madhu, and with his entire face delighted, and with a crown and bright earrings, and again (drawing the picture of) the lord of demons with two arms in a small or big chamber in his own house, he should then worship it. The lord of kings, who, being pleased and with his ministers and priests, and with his mother, brothers, and kinsmen, worships (the demon-lord) with lotuses, red lotuses, flowers, white lotuses and blue lotuses, with sandal, flowers, offerings of eatables with milk, jaggery and sweetened milk, with liquor, flesh, wine, things eaten by licking or by sucking, (other) eatables and offerings, and by (reciting) this hymn, gets happiness during that year: "O king Bali, O lord, O son of Virocana, salutation to you. O future Indra, O enemy of gods, accept this worship." Having thus offered the worship and keeping awake at night, he should make (others) keep awake at night with actors, dancers, singers, and make people place (the image of) king Bali with white rice inside the house on a couch, and should worship him with fruits and flowers. O Kārtikeya, everything there should be done with reference to Bali. The sages, the seers of truth say that all those (objects) that are inexhaustible (come to him). Whatever small or big gift is made here, all that would be inexhaustible, auspicious, and would please Viṣṇu. May all the untractable practices of those men who do not worship you, Bali, at night, come to you.

58-69. O child, Viṣṇu himself, being pleased, has granted this great festival to Bali who had obliged the demons. O Kārtikeya, since then (this festival of) Kaumudī has commenced (for) ever. It melts all troubles and destroys all difficulties. It removes the grief of people, it fulfils desires, and brings about wealth, nourishment and happiness. The word 'ku' stands for the earth, the word 'muda' stands for joy. Due to the root (meaning) of the two (words coming together) the festival is said to be (i.e. called) Kaumudī, since the people mutually rejoice (during it) on the earth. They are glad and pleased, are happy, so it is called Kaumudī. O son, since during it red lotuses are offered to Bali by kings for (removing) their sins, therefore it is called Kaumudī. To the king who every year gives the earth, (clean) like a mirror, for a day and night to the king of demons, how can there be fear from diseases? He has plenty of corn, happiness, health, excellent wealth. All people are free from diseases and free from all calamities. So, to spread devotion on the earth, the Kaumudī (festival) is celebrated. O Kārtikeya, he who lives with a (particular) feeling during it (i.e. the festival) passes the year with that feeling of joy, sorrow etc. If he weaps, the year makes him weep; if he is delighted, the year is delightful. If he enjoys (the festival) he enjoys the year; if he is happy, the year will be happy. Therefore, good men should joyfully celebrate Kaumudī. This day in Kārtika is said to be sacred to Viṣṇu and demons.

70-73. Of the families of the intelligent ones, having happiness due to (giving) gifts and enjoyments, who celebrate the light festival pleasing all, and who worship Bali, the entire year giving the lord(?), passes happily. O Skanda, these dates beginning with the second are well known. For four months and then in the rainy season they cause well-being. The first is in the month of Śrāvaṇa; the second is in the month of Bhādrapada; the third is in Āśvina; the fourth would be (i.e. fall) in Kārtika. Kaluṣā falls in the month of Śrāvaṇa, Amalā in Bhādrapada, Pretasaṁcārā in Āśvina, and Yāmyakāmyatā in Kārtika.

Kārtikeya said:

74. Why is the one (in Śrāvaṇa) called Kaluṣā? Why is the one (in Bhādrapada) said to be Nirmalā? Why is the one (in

Āśvina called Pretasaṁcārā? And why is the fourth called Yāmyā?

Sūta said:

75. Hearing these words of Kārtikeya, the Bull-bannered lord, the cause of the beings, laughed, and spoke (these) gentle words.

Maheśa said:

76-88. Formerly when Vṛtra was killed and Indra obtained the kingdom, a horse sacrifice was commenced to remove the sin of the brāhmaṇa's murder. Indra angrily killed the brāhmaṇa (Vṛtra) with his thunderbolt. The (sin of the) killing was thrown down on the earth in six ways: in a tree, in water, on the land, in a woman, in one who causes abortion, and in fire after dividing it in due order. Due to hearing about that sin, with the day previous to the second, a woman, a tree, a river, the land, fire, and one who procures an abortion are polluted. For this reason it is called Kaluṣā. Formerly the earth merged into the blood of Madhu and Kaiṭabha. Therefore (to the measure of) eight fingers she is impure. The menstrual flow of women is impure. All the rivers in the rainy season are impure. Fire (going) up is impure due to soot. Trees are impure due to exudation. Those that cause an abortion are impure due to contact. Filth moves on this day. Therefore, she is said to be Kaluṣā. There are the wicked atheists who censure the good practices of gods and sages. The second one is pure from the filth of their words. Therefore, it is Nirmalā. The Sāṁkhyas, Tārkikas (i.e. logicians) teach and study the sacred texts on days forbidden for study. On the second (i.e. Amalā) day the Śruti-followers are purified from the filth of their words and bad words. Therefore it (is called) Nirmalā. O child, the three worlds would be purified due to the birth of Kṛṣṇa in Śrāvaṇa. The wise ones have indicated it as Nirmalā. The Pretasaṁcārā is (so called) because of movements of the dead ancestors, grandsires like the Agniṣvāttas, the Barhiṣads, the Ājyapas, and the Somapas also. The dead ancestors are called departed spirits. They move on that (day). They are worshipped with Svadhā hymns by their sons, and the sons of their sons and daughters. They, moving

departed spirits, leave after being gratified by means of śrāddhas, gifts and sacrifices. The spirits are seen to move on the earth on the Mahālaya.

89-103. Therefore, O Kārtikeya, it is called Pretasaṁcārā, Since, O Kārtikeya, on this day worship is offered to Yama by men, therefore, it is called Yāmyakā. I have told the truth and the truth (only). Those best men who listen to the importance of Kārtika, certainly get the religious merit due to the (daily) bath in Kārtika. A man, having bathed on the Bhānujā on the second day of Kārtika, should worship Yama in the morning. (Thereby) he does not see Yama. O Śaunka, formerly, on the second day of the bright half of Kārtika, Yama was fed and honoured by Yamunā in her house. On the second day a great gift (is given). Denizens of hell are gratified. They, separated (i.e. freed) from sins, are free from all bondage. They all, being praised, remain pleased as they like. This great festival, giving pleasure to Yama's region, takes place for them. Therefore, this Yamadvitīyā is well known in the three worlds, and so the wise should not eat at home (on this day). They should affectionately take a nourishing meal at their sister's hand; gifts should duly be given to sisters. Then along with the gift of golden ornaments and garments and honouring (their sister) they should eat from the hand of their sister of whole blood. The meal from the sister's hand should be taken on all (these days). It is nourishing. Yama is gratified on the second day of bright half of Kārtika. Yama is mounted upon the seat (i.e. back) of a he-buffalo. The lord holds a staff and a mallet. He is surrounded by his jubilant servants. Obeisance to him of the nature of Yāmyā. For those who have pleased their sisters whose husbands are alive, with gifts of garments etc. there is no quarrel (with anyone), nor any fear from their enemy during the year. O sinless one, O my son, I have told you the entire account along with its secret. It is blessed, gives success, increases the (span of) life, and is the means of righteous acts and enjoyments. Since on this day god Yamarāja was well-fed by Yamunā with a sister's affection (for her brother), therefore he who, on this day, eats from the hand of his sister, gets wealth and excellent riches.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYTHREE

Instructions Concerning the Fast

Kārtikeya said:

1-3. O lord, I wish to listen to the vow which is best among the vows; so also the mode of observing the fast for a month and the fruit of it as is told; and also how the vow is to be commenced, and how it is to be duly completed. O lord, tell me in detail the number (of days) for which this vow is to be observed, O best of the gods.

Śrī Rudra said:

4-17. Well, O kārtikeya, hear from me who am telling you, all that you have devoutly asked, O best among the intelligent. As Viṣṇu is among gods, as the Sun is among the shining ones, as Meru is among mountains, and Garuḍa among birds, as Gaṅgā is among holy places, as the trader is among the subjects, so is this fast for a month the best of all vows. He who observes the fast for a month would obtain the merit of all vows, and all holy places, and the fruit due to all gifts. A man does obtain that merit by means of sacrifices like Agniṣṭoma (performed) with profuse gifts, which he obtains by fasting for a month. A man who duly observes the fast for a month, has (indeed) muttered (hymns), has offered oblations into fire, has given (gifts), has practised penance, and performed svadhā (i.e. pleased his dead ancestors by offering them oblations). Dedicating a sacrifice to Viṣṇu, and having worshipped him, and having secured his preceptor's order, he should fast for a month. Having observed all the auspicious vows as prescribed for the devotee of Viṣṇu, such as Dvādaśī, he should then observe the fast for a month. Having observed Atikṛcchra, Pārāka and Cāndrāyaṇa (vows) he, considering his physical strength and weakness, should observe the fast for a month. An anchorite or an ascetic or a widow should observe the fast for a month with the preceptor's—brāhmaṇa's—order. Having bathed and fasted on the eleventh of Āśvina, he should take up this vow for thirty days. That man who, worshipping Viṣṇu, would fast for the entire month of Kārtika, would enjoy the fruit of salvation.

In the temple of Viṣṇu he should devoutly worship Viṣṇu three times (a day) with jasmine flowers, blue lotuses, lilies and lotuses, camphor and besmearing (the image) with saffron, sandal, and excellent sandal, (should worship him) with offerings of eatables, incense and lights.

18-29. A man, a woman or a widow, having great devotion and with his senses conquered, should worship the Garuḍa-bannered (god Viṣṇu) with mind, deeds and words, and should day and night utter the names of Viṣṇu. He should devoutly and without false words utter Viṣṇu's praise. Full of compassion for all beings, of a tranquil temperament, harmless, sleeping and sitting on a seat outside, he should narrate (the praise of) Viṣṇu. He should avoid thinking, seeing, enjoying fragrant articles, and talking of food, and should give up (taking) morsels. He should avoid smearing his body with oil, smearing his head with oil, (chewing) tāmbūla, smearing his body when he is observing the vow, and should avoid everything that is prohibited. While observing the vow he should not touch anything and should not disturb anyone doing a deed. A householder, remaining in a temple, should certainly observe the vow. A man, a good woman or a widow, having duly observed the fast for a month, should worship Viṣṇu properly. With his mind controlled and senses conquerred, he should observe this vow without anything wanting or additional for thirty days, and should observe the fast for a month, and then on the Dvādaśī (day) he should worship the auspicious Garuḍa-bannered (god). He should worship him with garlands of flowers, sandal, incense, and by besmearing (his image). A man should please Viṣṇu with clothes, ornaments, and (by playing upon) musical instruments. With water from holy places and mixed with sandal he should devoutly bath the image of Viṣṇu. He should (worship) the image besmeared with sandal, and adorneed with incense and flowers. Having fed best brāhmaṇas and pleased them with dakṣiṇā (i.e. presents), and saluting them he should apologise to them. Having apologised to the brāhmaṇas, he should dismiss them after having honoured and worshipped them.

30-42. In this way having observed the fast for a month and worshipped Viṣṇu according to his monetary capacity, with

devotion, and having fed the brāhmaṇas according to his capacity he is honoured in the heaven of Viṣṇu. Now listen to the manner in which at the end of the fast for a month, having chosen thirteen brāhmaṇas, he should dismiss them. Observing a fast on the Ekādaśī day, he should perform a sacrifice (in honour) of Viṣṇu. Having, with the consent of his preceptor, worshipped the lord of gods, and having, according to his capacity, honoured his preceptor, he should salute his preceptor. Then he should feed after saluting the brāhmaṇas of a pure character and family and greatly devoted to worshipping Viṣṇu. Then having worshipped and fed all the brāhmaṇas and having given the best brāhmaṇas tāmbūlas, pairs of garments, food and coverings, so also yogapaṭṭas (i.e. cloths thrown over the back and knees of ascetics during abstract meditation), threads and sacred threads and then having saluted them, he should devoutly honour them. He should prepare a bed furnished with a cover, well-covered, beautiful, excellent, with pillows and decorated. Then, having according to his capacity, got fashioned his (i.e. Viṣṇu's) golden image, he should put it on the bed after worshipping it with garlands etc. On the bed he should put a seat, wooden sandals, an umbrella, a pair of garments and shoes, and pure flowers. Having thus made the bed, and having saluted those brāhmaṇas, he should request the brāhmaṇas for their consent and say: "I am going to Viṣṇu's world." Then the best man would go to Viṣṇu's healthy abode. He should repeatedly say to the brāhmaṇas seated in the pavilion: "O best brāhmaṇas, may all that is without the (proper) hymns and (proper) acts, be fully accomplished due to the favour of your words." I have (thus) properly told (you) the manner of (observing) the vow of the fast for a month.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYFOUR

Haribodhinī, Bhīṣmapañcaka etc.

The lord said:

1-15. O best god, also listen to the greatness of Prabodhinī which destroys sins, enhances merit, and gives salvation to those who comprehend the truth. O Kārtikeya, Gaṅgā Bhāgīrathī roars on the earth till the time the Haribodhinī (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika has not come. The holy places and the lakes up to the ocean roar till the time the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī) in Kārtika has not arrived. Thousands of horse sacrifices and hundreds of Rājasūya sacrifices are equal to one fast on the Prabodhinī (Ekādaśī). O brāhmaṇa, Prabodhinī gives even that which is desired but which is difficult to be got or reached in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. O brāhmaṇa, Haribodhinī when fasted on, easily gives affluence, union, knowledge, kingdom, happiness and wealth. Just by means of one fast Haribodhinī burns the sins resembling Meru and Mandara committed (by a man). O best among men, he who naturally observes a fast on the Prabodhinī (day), according to the rule, gets the fruit as is told (in the sacred texts). The sin committed during thousands of former existences is burnt like a heap of cotton by keeping awake on the Prabodhinī (day). O Kārtikeya, listen; I shall tell you the characteristic(s) of the vigil, by merely knowing which Viṣṇu is not difficult to be secured. O noble one, a man should sing, play upon musical instruments, recite the Purāṇas, offer incense, light, eatables, flowers, besmear (the image) with sandal, offer fruits, respectful offerings, have faith, give gifts, control his senses, be truthful, without sleep, full of joy and (religious) acts, (offer worship) with energy and without laziness etc. by going round (the image), and preceded by obeisance, so also accompanied by waving of lights. With a mind free from dejection he should wave lights before Viṣṇu in every watch. He who, with a concentrated mind, keeps vigil accompanied with these characteristics, and without dishonesty regarding money, for the lord, is not reborn on the earth.

16-26. He who thus devoutly and without deceitfulness keeps awake on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, is taken to the

highest position. He who, everyday in Kārtika, worships Viṣṇu with the recital of the Puruṣa-sūkta (hymn) has worshipped Viṣṇu for thousands of crores of years. The man who would everyday worship Viṣṇu in Kārtika according to the prescribed manner for five days, would enjoy salvation. He who would worship Viṣṇu (saying) 'Salutation to Nārāyaṇa', is free from torments in hell and goes to an auspicious position. He who recites in Kārtika (the hymn containing) the thousand names of Viṣṇu, and (the account of) the release of the lord of elephants, does not have rebirth. He who keeps awake on the Dvādaśī in the month of Kārtika lives in heaven for thousands of crores of yugas and hundreds of Manu's periods. And hundreds and thousands (persons) born in his family obtain Viṣṇu's position. Therefore, one should keep awake. O beautiful lady, he who eulogises and sings (songs about Viṣṇu) in the last watch (of a day) in Kārtika, lives in Śvetadvīpa with his dead ancestors. He who offers eatables to Viṣṇu at the end of a day in Kārtika lives for so many yugas in heaven, O best sages. O best sage, he who would continuously worship the lord of gods with jasmine flowers and lotus, goes to the highest position. A man who observes (fast on) the Ekādasī of the bright half of Kārtika, and gives auspicious pitchers (to brāhmaṇas) in the morning, goes to my abode.

Kārtikeya said:

27-28. O lord, tell me about the virtuous vow, best among the vows, viz. Bhīṣmapañcaka to be observed in the month of Kārtika. Through favour to me and the sages, tell me, O grandsire, about the manner in which it is observed, and its fruit, O best god.

The lord said:

29-45. O you best among the believers in vows, I shall explain to you the very meritorious vow which lasts for five days. Since Bhīṣma got it from Viṣṇu, it is called Bhīṣmapañcaka. Who, except Viṣṇu, is able to tell the merits of this vow? Listen to the ancient practice. In the bright half of Kārtika it was observed by Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, Garga etc. in the ages like Kṛta. In the yugas like Tretā it was observed by Ambarīṣa with

(offerings of) food etc. and by brāhmaṇas observing celibacy, muttering hymns and performing rites like sacrifices. So also (it was observed) by kṣatriyas and vaiśyas highly devoted to truth and purity. It is difficult to be observed by those who are void of truth (i.e. are not truthful) and cannot be observed by those of foolish hearts. They say it is difficult to be observed, (that is, it is) 'Bhīṣma'. It cannot be observed by ordinary men. O best brāhmaṇa, he who observes it, has (indeed) observed every (vow). This Bhīṣmapañcaka vow gives great merit, destroys great sins. Therefore, men should carefully observe it. Having properly and according to the precept bathed on the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Kārtika one should take up this vow lasting for five days. The observer of the vow should especially bathe in the morning and at mid-day in a river or a spring, and having obtained cowdung with rice and barley he should in due course gratify his dead ancestors. One of a strong vow, having bathed and observed silence, and having put on washed garments, should carefully offer water and make respectful offering to Bhīṣma. He should carefully worship Bhīṣma and give gifts. He should carefully and especially give five jewels to a brāhmaṇa. Lord Viṣṇu with Lakṣmī should also be always worshipped. By means of worshipping (Viṣṇu) during the group of five (days) Viṣṇu is pleased for crores of kalpas. Whatever (image etc.) is made, he should fashion it with five metals. By giving water and making a respectful offering, a man gets the entire fruit of vows (lasting) for a year. One who makes (the offering) with (the recital of) this hymn: 'I am offering this water to Bhīṣma who has Vaiyāghrapāda gotra and Sāṁkṛta pravara' would enjoy salvation. 'I make the respectful offering to Bhīṣma, the incarnation of the Vasus, the son of Śantanu, and a life-long celibate.' This is the hymn of the respectful offering.

46-56. He, who, in this way, finishes the group of five (days), undoubtedly gets religious merit equal to that of a horse sacrifice. For five days he should carefully observe restraint. O son, the practice of a vow is not possible without restraint. Viṣṇu gave (the highest position) to Bhīṣma who departed in the Uttarāyaṇa; he became[1]....Then he should get Viṣṇu, the

1. This part is unintelligible (Tr.)

destroyer of all sins. Then he should devoutly bathe (the image) with water, honey, milk and ghee; so also with the five products of a cow and water mixed with sandal. Then he should besmear (the image of) Viṣṇu, the Garuḍa-bannered (god) with fragrant sandal, with saffron, and with camphor mixed with uśīra (sandal). He should worship (the image) with charming flowers along with black aloewood and incense. He, with devotion, should burn guggulu (a fragrant gum resin) with ghee before (the image of) Kṛṣṇa. During the five days he should offer light day and night. He should offer excellent food as offering of eatables. Having thus worshipped, remembered and saluted the god, he should mutter one hundred and eight times the hymn *Namo Vāsudevāya*. He should make an offering with sesamum, rice and barley smeared with ghee, with the utterance of the hymn of six syllables, along with the utterance of the exclamation *svāhā*. The observer of the vow, having offered the evening sandhyā prayer, having saluted Viṣṇu, having muttered the hymn as before, should sleep on the (bare) ground.

57-69. All this should be done for five days. Listen to the speciality of and that which is superior in this vow. On the first day the observer of the vow should worship Viṣṇu's feet with lotuses. On the second (day) he should worship his knees with bilva-leaves. Then, with his mind directed to him, he should devoutly worship the head of the Disc-holder, the god of gods, with jasmine flowers on the full-moon day of Kārtika. Having succinctly worshipped Viṣṇu on the Ekādaśī, he, after having eaten cowdung, should duly observe fast on the Ekādaśī day. The observer of the vow should drink cow's urine on the Dvādaśī, milk on the Trayodaśī and curd on the Caturdaśī with (the recital of) the hymn. Having eaten (and drunk these) for the purification of his body and having fasted for four days, he should, after bathing, worship Viṣṇu according to the sacred precept. Giving up sinful thoughts the intelligent one, observing celibacy, should devoutly feed brāhmaṇas, and give presents to them. The man, avoiding liquor and flesh, so also sinful coitus, subsisting on vegetables and sages' foods, should be deeply engaged in worshipping Kṛṣṇa. Then having first (sipped) the five products of the cow, he should eat at night. He would

obtain the fruit of the vow thus duly concluded. (Even) a drunkard who would drink liquor from birth to death obtains the highest position by observing this Bhīṣma-vow. By the words (i.e. order) of a brāhmaṇa, women should observe it, which enchances religious merit. Widows also should observe it for salvation, and an increase in their happiness. O Kārtikeya, men observe the Kārtika(vow) by bathing everyday and (giving) gifts for abundance of (the fulfilment of) all desires and for (obtaining) religious merit. O child, greatly engrossed in meditation upon Viṣṇu, they should also perform the Vaiśvadeva sacrifice (in honour of all deities), which gives health and sons and destroys great sins.

70-78. O Kārtikeya, with all efforts he should observe the Kārtika (vow) at holy places. The conclusion of all the vows (observed) during the year is observed in Kārtika. An image of Sin should be fashioned. It should have fearful clothes and should be very fierce. It should have a sword in its hand; it should have come out (i.e. should be prominent); it should have iron fangs and be dreadful. Covered with a black piece of cloth it should be put on a prastha (i.e. a particular measure) of sesamum seeds. Its wreath should be made of red flowers; its golden earrings should be bright. Having, with great devotion, worshipped it with (the utterance of) the names of Dharmarāja, he taking a handful of flowers, should recite this hymn: 'Due to the grace of your feet may the sin committed in another (i.e. previous) existence or in this, perish.' Having duly worshipped that golden image, and having, according to his capacity honoured the brāhmaṇas, expounders of the Vedas, he should, to please Kṛṣṇa, god of gods, of unimpaired acts, give it to a brāhmaṇa (saying) 'May Dharma be pleased with me.' According to his capacity he should give presents to the reader (of the next). Saying, 'May Kṛṣṇa be pleased with me', he should give gold and cows also. Having done his deeds, and being detached, he should be controlled. According to his capacity he should give excellente gifts to others also.

79-83. (Such) a man, of a tranquil mind, and guiltless, would obtain the highest position. He should reflect upon Mahādeva who is dark green like the petal of a blue lotus, who has four fangs and four arms, who has eight feet, and one eye,

who is spike-eared and has a rough voice, who is cold, who has two tongues, whose eyes are red, who has a lion-like thin cover. He has no form. Bhīṣma, being on the bed of arrows told this to me. This vow known as Bhīṣmapañcaka on the earth, is confined to five days beginning with Ekādaśī. There is no prohibition for him who is intent on taking food. Due to that vow Viṣṇu gives an auspicious fruit.

Sūta said:

84-88. This has more religious merit than all (other) vows. It is difficult to be done on the earth. This secret, the collection of the essences of the sacred texts, is told by me. It is a secret of the gods. It is a great secret. It at once gives salvation even to those who are engaged in illicit intercourse. It would free one from both the sins of selling one's daughter or one's sister. This sacred text leading to salvation should not be revealed to other people. A man hearing it at once goes to salvation. It should be carefully preserved. This auspicious (vow) is not to be told to them who give it up. This is the truth and the (only) truth, O Kārtikeya. Thus all the fruit that Kārtika has is told.

Śrī Viṣṇu said:

89-96. The god of gods told it to his son for his welfare. Hearing those words of his father, Kārtikeya was full of joy. All those, with the palms of their hands joined, said to the god, the life of the world: "We are blessed by hearing the fruit due to Kārtika. Nothing else is to be heard. I have obtained the fruit of my existence." That man who, having heard (this description of) the greatness (of the vow), would honour the reader (of it) with (the grant of a piece of) land, gold, garments, is equal to Viṣṇu, since when the reader is honoured, Viṣṇu is worshipped. Like that he should always give to the reader if he desires the auspicious religious texts, Purāṇa, or Vedic texts, etc. to be fruitful. One who desires religious merit should give the book to the reader only. Those who give the Purāṇic texts, enjoy inexhaustible fruits. He who would devoutly read this, or would retain it after having heard it, is freed from all sins, and goes to Viṣṇu's heaven. There is no doubt that merely by listening to the (account of this) importance, he gets wealth, grains, fame, sons, (long) life, and good health.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYFIVE

The Importance of Māgha As Told by Bhṛgu

The sages said:

1-3. O Sūta, O noble Sūta, you, desiring the well-being of the world have narrated the account of Kārtika giving pleasures and salvation. O Lomaharṣaṇi, now tell us about the importance of Māgha, hearing which the great doubt of people diminishes. Tell us who formerly revealed the greatness of the bath in Māgha along with its history, O noble one.

Sūta said:

4-9. Good! good! O best sages, you are greatly devoted to Kṛṣṇa. Since you with joy and devotion repeatedly ask Kṛṣṇa's story, I shall tell you the greatness of Māgha that increases the religious merit and destroys the sin of those who have bathed at dawn. O brāhmaṇas, once Pārvatī, touching the lotus-like feet of Śaṅkara with modesty, asked him, the benefactor of the world:

Pārvatī said:

O god of gods, O great god, O you who grant fearlessness to your devotees, be pleased, O lord of the universe. Tell me what I ask you now. O master, formerly I heard from you many kinds of religious practices. Now I desire to hear the greatness of Māgha. Tell it. Since you love your devotees, tell me who observed it formerly, what is the mode (of observing it), which is the deity. Tell (me) all that in detail.

Śiva said:

10-24. King Dilīpa, best among kings, whose auspicious rites were performed by the sages after the ablution after a sacrifice, who was honoured by all citizens, went out of his city. The king was interested in hunting. He was full of curiosity, and was surrounded by an assemblage for hunting. He had put on his shoes, a blue turban and had covered his chest. He had a leathern fence fastened round his left arm to prevent injury

from the bow string, had a finger-protector, and a bow in his hand and a sword. (He was accompanied) by archers with small swords, so also foot soldiers like that. The young (king), brave like a lion, gladly sported with them in the bowers, looking for game in very charming large thickets in Gandhāra. He crossed great streams. 'Kill him, kill him; this deer is fleeing.' Speaking like this to his servants, he himself jumped and killed it. Again he moved here and there observing at places the forest-ground which was crowded with groups of frightened peacocks, that flew to the trees and hid themselves. It was full of fear of the herds of (frightened) female deer. In its various directions young ones of deer were running. It was fierce due to the sharp howls of jackals at places. The forest at places bore the beauty of elephants due to the groups of young rhinoceroses (*obscure*). At places it was resounding with the hooting of owls resorting to the hollows of trees. At places it was marked with the impressions of the paws of lions. At places it was red due to the blood of the rohita deer, torn apart by the nails of tigers. At places it suggested to the mind (that it was) the ground in the courtyard of the harem due to the groups of the Mahiṣīs (buffaloes/queens) troubled by the burden of their stout (udders) breasts. At places it was covered with dense trees, and was fragrant with wild flowers. It at places had doors in the form of creepers, and was very charming with the humming of bees. It had large holes fearful due to serpents whose sloughs had partly come out. It was fearful due to the large serpents hiding in it, and spreading sloughs. It at places had the flames of wild fire, and very beautiful due to lustre from stones; it was full of the hissing sounds; it was crowded with deer and tigers. At places he let loose the group of his dogs against rabbits. Having rested at the (banks of) ponds he went to another forest.

25-39. When the lord of kings was going like this, and the group of hunters was swaggering, he saw a deer making a loud noise and moving out of a thicket. With hasty strides it crossed the ground having inaccessible paths. At times it jumped into the air, and at times it was seen on the ground. The king, following its footsteps, entered an impassable forest very imperious due to crooked streams and full of thorny trees. The king, going further and further away and from one solitary region to

another, had his neck and throat dry due to the excitement caused by (his) not (being able) to see the deer. His palate and face had become red. He was perspiring. His footmen were tired; his voice was wavering. After having passed over long ways, he, oppressed with thirst, saw, when the sun had gone to the middle (of the sky, i.e. at noon), before him a lake that vied with the ocean, on the bank of which there were dense trees, which was a holy place, was clean and auspicious. It was large; the lotuses in it had bloomed; the bees were intoxicated with honey. It was covered with green lotus-leaves like emeralds. The fish in it was leaping at will like the clean mind of a good man. It was full of moving aquatic animals. It was adorned with the rows of waves. Like the mind of the wicked, it was rough inside due to the groups of crocodiles; at places, it was, due to moss, inaccessible like a miser's house. Day and night it pacified all the afflictions of various birds. Like donors with all their belongings it destroyed the afflictions of those that resorted to it. With its water it gratified the wild beasts like its own dead ancestors. Like the moon it removed all the heat of the day. Seeing it, he was free from languor like a cātaka on seeing a cloud. Having drunk water there, and having performed the mid-day rites, the king ate, with his companions, the flesh of the game. He, telling charming stories, stayed on its bank, and keeping his arrow fixed to the bow (string), he rested on the bank at night. The hunters, fixing their arrows to the bow strings, blocked the paths of the directions. When the warriors remained like this, having spread the nets, at night on every bank a herd of hogs moved out, and having eaten the bulbs in the lake, jumped (before) the crowd of the hunters.

40-48. The king pierced the hogs; and many were killed by the hunters. In a moment, the hogs that were pierced, fell on the ground. Seeing them, the very proud hunters made an uproar, and running with great joy, gathered where the king stayed. Bringing them through his soldiers, he left the bank of the lake. Desiring to go (back) to his city he saw an ascetic on the way. (He saw) the brāhmaṇa, old Hārīta, well adorned with a conch and disc, with his body emaciated due to restraints difficult to observe and intense. He remained only in bones (i.e. had become skeleton-like), he was highly restrained, and his skin

had become rough. He wore a deer-skin, and put on a soft-bark-garment. He was muttering hymns from the Vedas. He had long nails and hair and matted hair. Seeing that hermit, and giving him passage, the king, with respect saluted him with his head (bent) and the hollows of his hands resembling a lotus joined. The brāhmaṇa (i.e. Hārīta), taking him to be a king from his ornaments, and with a desire for obliging others, and for bringing about his welfare said (to him): "At this meritorious and auspicious time, for what purpose are you going, O king, avoiding (i.e. not taking) a morning bath in the month of Māgha?" Then the king replied, "O best brāhmaṇa, I do not know.

49-57. Tell me in detail what kind of fruit the Māgha bath has." Hearing these words of the king, the ascetic said: "O king, the glorious sun, removing the darkness, is quickly rising. This is the time for our bath and not the time for a talk. After bathing, go to Vasiṣṭha, and ask him, the master of your family." Saying so the anchorite, observing silence, went for his morning bath. The hero Dilīpa too, turning back, and bathing there with the proper rite, and full of joy went to his own city. In his harem he again told the account of the anchorite. Having got into a chariot having white horses, and with a white umbrella and white chowries (he went to Vasiṣṭha's hermitage). Being adorned, having put on good garments and surrounded by his ministers, and repeatedly hearing the cries of victory made by the panegyrists and bards, he remembering the words of the sage, went to Vasiṣṭha's hermitage. There only he saluted the brāhmaṇa sage with politeness. Being given a seat, he accepted the respectful offering, and was adorned with blessings; and when the sage asked the king about his well-being, the king, delighting the sage's mind spoke the words. He of a sweet form asked (Vasiṣṭha) about what the anchorite had told him.

Dilīpa said:

58-60. O glorious one, by your grace I have, in detail, heard (from you) about the practices, administration of justice, and the great duties of a king, so also the duties of the four castes and stages of human life; so also gifts, and the manners in which they are given; so also sacrifices and rites; so also the

vows told by him, and about Viṣṇu's worship. Now I desire to know the fruit to be had from Māgha bath along with the manner in which it is done. O brāhmaṇa, O sage, tell it to me.

Vasiṣṭha said:

61-71a. That sage, living in the forest, has properly told the highest bliss, bringing about the good of the three worlds, and removing the sin. Those not defeated by the glances of beautiful women (though) in proximity, desire to bathe in the stream when the Sun is in Capricornus. O dear one, those who desire beatitude without (offerings into) fire, sacrifices, without performing sacrifices and digging wells and doing other acts of charity, go out to bathe every morning in Māgha. O king, those who desire (salvation) without giving (a piece of) land, a cow, gold, rubies, cows fashioned with gold etc. bathe in Māgha. Those who desire (to go to) heaven without parching their bodies with the vows lasting for three weeks, the Kṛcchra and Pārāka, always bathe in Māgha. Viṣṇu's worship in Vaiśākha, penance and worship in Kārtika, and the three, viz. penance, sacrifice and gifts, excel (everything else). A man having a planned conclusion (of these) would certainly become the lord of the earth, due to which there would again be no idea leading to salvation (*obscure*). That worship (including) fasting, penance and (giving) gifts in the month of Māgha, O best king, was laid down by those having divine eyes. For (fulfilling) a desire, or for progeny, or for Viṣṇu or (even) without (any of these) one observing the vow of purifying his body (has) four kinds of fruit obtained by bathing. For twelve years Aditi without taking food bathed (daily) in Māgha and obtained twelve sons illuminating the three worlds. Rohiṇī became a favourite wife; Arundhatī became exceedingly liberal; Śacī was endowed with beauty.

71b-86. Those who bathe when the Sun is in the Capricornus sign of the Zodiac, happily live in a palace which has seven storeys, is endowed with beauty due to being cleaned, the courtyard of which is charming with dancers, crowded with beautiful women, which is resounding with singing and musical instruments, which is charming with auspicious practices, which

is pure due to the sounds of (the recital of) the Vedas, which is adorned by learned brāhmaṇas, which is constantly used in worshipping deities, which is charming, which is always resorted to by guests. For those who have given much in Māgha, have worshipped and praised Viṣṇu, Māgha always produces religious merit due to their abandoning dear objects and observing restraints. Māgha cuts off the root of their sins; it is the root of desired objects through giving fruits; it without a desire and always gives knowledge. Those worlds which are secured by those disposed to (securing) knowledge, by those living in forests (i.e. anchorites), by devotees of Viṣṇu, are always secured by those who bathe in Māgha. O hero, due to having (exhansted) religious merit, other men return from heaven; but men given to bathing in Māgha never return. A man who, having bathed in Māgha, gives a milch cow (to a brāhmaṇa), is honoured in heaven for as many thousand years as are the small hair on her entire body, O best king. A man who bathes in Māgha and would give sesamum seeds with jaggery, shines spotless, having washed his sin. Of all the heaps of grains sesamum seeds destroy the sins. Therefore, O best king, sesamum seeds should be given with (every) effort. A man bathing in Māgha should feed brāhmaṇas. He, of a pure soul, after gratifying his dead ancestors, goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu. Therefore, with all efforts Māgha is passed in giving gifts (by men). O best king, a man should not pass Māgha without (giving) a gift. Knowing his (i.e. according to his) wealth he should always give gifts in Māgha. He who would bathe in Māgha and who gives sandals and pitchers to brāhmaṇas, certainly lives in heaven. A man practising the excellent penance of bathing in Māgha, should never pass it without (giving) a gift. Heaven is obtained through charity.

87-89. O king, heaven is obtained through giving (gifts). Happiness is obtained through giving (gifts). Blemish due to great sin perishes due to giving (gifts). Penance without giving (gifts) does not shine like the sky without the sun, or a family without progeny, or a house without good practices. There is nothing superior to this, that is pure and that destroys sins. (This) was related to a vidyādhara by Bhṛgu on Maṇi mountain.

The king said:

90. O brāhmaṇa, when did that brāhmaṇa Bhṛgu give him the instruction in the religious practice on the mountain. Tell it to me, (as I am asking it) through curiosity.

Vasiṣṭha said:

91-94. O king, formerly the clouds did not shower (water) for twelve years. People being afflicted and emaciated, went into all the ten directions. When, O king, at that time the region between Himālaya and Vindhya had become barren, was devoid of the utterances of *svāhā*, *svahdā* and *vaṣaṭ*, and the study of the Vedas, when the world was in distress, when piety had disappeared, and when the world had become lustreless, when the globe was void of fruits, roots, food and water, Bhṛgu, along with his disciples, moved out of his hermitage on the charming bank of Revā covered with trees of Vindhya mountain, and went to the Himālaya mountain.

95-110. There, to the west of Kailāsa mountain, stands a mountain, known as Maṇikūṭa—a heap of gold, gems and red arsenic. The mountain is crystal-like white in the lower parts, has dark blue slabs in the middle; and surrounded by grandeur on all sides, and white, it shone like Śiva. It is dark-blue everywhere, and has golden lines in between. It shines like a cloud with the streak of lightning flashing. At the top the mountain has dark blue rocks. Below (it) it has a golden girdle. It shines like Viṣṇu wearing a yellow garment. Appearing very dark green without the girdle, it has white rocks (at places) in the middle. The mountain shone like the sky with stars. It shone like another moon that had secured his own white body, that bore divine herbs, and that diffused great light. The mountain always shone with the music of kinnarīs on its table-lands, with bamboos, and with the banners in the form of the leaves of plantain trees. The mountain was as it were covered with rainbows due to the circles of the rays of lustre of the sharp rocks of green stones, lapis lazuli, and rubies. It was well adorned with gold, full of all minerals, various gems; it was covered everywhere with lofty peaks like flames of fire. Vidyādhara women overcome with sexual desire come to its slopes having grass and

big rocks and serve their husbands. The detached ones, having restrained their breath, and having overcome anger, day and night meditate upon Brahman in its caves. Siddhas, with rosaries and (sacred) threads in their hands, with their eyes half-open, propitiate Śiva in the beautiful caves. This (mountain), having rendered fragrant the quarters with the fragrance of the mandāra flowers, is always noisy with the murmuring sound of the water of the mountain torrents. The mountain is always charming due to the young ones of the elephants and the elephants in the forest playing in the lands at its foot, due to herds of musk-deer and charming spotted antelopes, so also due to the sporting flocks of camaras and strange wild beasts, cooing pigeons, cakoras and cuckoos also, so also due to royal swans and peacocks. It is always resorted to by gods, guhyakas and bevies of celestial damsels.

The king said:

111-117. The mountain is full of many wonders; it is the resort of all (kinds of) prosperity. O revered one, what is its height? What is its length? How extensive is it?

The sage said:

At (i.e. up to) its top it is thirtysix yojanas in height. Its length and expanse are ten yojanas. At the foot it is sixteen yojanas. It is adorned with the rows of yellow sandal (trees), mandāra (trees) and mango (trees). It is crowded with devadāru trees, and is adorned with sarala and arjuna (trees). The best mountain, always giving flowers and fruits, shines with kālāgaru trees, clove trees, so also with arbours and bowers. On seeing that beautiful mountain, Bhṛgu who was oppressed with famine, was mentally delighted and lived there only. (On the charming mountain, in its caves and thickets) Bhṛgu well-engrossed in penance, practised penance for a long time. Getting down from the mountain a vidhyādhara couple came (there). Approaching the sage, saluting him, it very much grieved, and stayed there.

118-130a. Seeing them like that the brāhmaṇa spoke sweet words: "O vidyādhara, tell me in a friendly way why you are so much unhappy." Hearing the sage's words, the vidyādhara said

to the brāhmaṇa: "O best among the ascetics, listen to the cause of my unhappiness. Having obtained the fruit of my religious merit, I reached heaven. Though I got a deity's (i.e. a divine) body, my face was like a tiger's. I do not know of which deed (of mine) this effect came up. Again and again thinking like this, I did not obtain pleasure. O brāhmaṇa, listen to this another (thing) due to which my mind is afflicted. This my wife is auspicious, of a sweet voice and beautiful. She is proficient in the arts of dancing and singing; she possesses all good qualities. When she was a maiden, she, the spotless one, playing upon the lute, very much delighted, with the seven strings, sage Nārada skilled in playing upon the lute. This one, having a lovely voice, pleased, even in her childlike state, the lord of gods, conversant with charming tunes. Hearing the fifth note, sweet due to many winding modes (of singing) of her with her body horripilating due to eagerness while playing upon the lute, Śiva nodding his head, and horripilated, was delighted. No other beautiful woman having the grace of good character, generosity, (other) hosts of virtues, beauty and youth, like her, is (to be found) in heaven. 'What a great disparity is there between this divine-faced female and a tiger-faced male like me?' O brāhmaṇa, always thinking like this in my mind, I am burning." Hearing these words, Bhṛgu, Ikṣvāku's son, having a divine eye, and knowing the three times, laughed and said:

130b-138a. "O best vidyādhara, listen to the strange fruit of (one's) deeds. Having obtained it, the wise are not deluded, but the ignorant are deluded. As poison, just of the measure of the wing of a bee is dangerous, similarly even a small act, not enjoined, is dangerous in its effect. Having fasted on Ekādaśī, you smeared your body with oil. Due to that you have become tiger-faced in the body of the previous existence on Dvādaśī. Formerly Purūravas, having fasted on the auspicious Ekādaśī but having used oil on the Dvādaśī obtained, like you, an ugly body. Seeing his ugly body, he was pained by that affliction. He went to the lord of mountains on the lake of the deities, and staying there with great joy, he bathed, and being pure, (sat on) a darbha-seat. The king, fasting, and, having controlled all his senses, and reflecting in his mind on Viṣṇu, dark green like a fresh cloud, having large lotus-like eyes, holding a conch, a disc, a mace and a lotus,

covered with a yellow garment, shining with Kaustubha, wearing a garland of wood-flowers, practised a very severe penance for three months.

138b-151. Pleased with the small penance, Viṣṇu, remembering his being worshipped by the king during the (previous) seven existences, himself appeared before him on the Dvādaśī of the bright half of Māgha when the Sun was in Capricornus. Having quickly sprinkled that emperor with water from his conch, Viṣṇu, reminding him of his having used the oil, gave him an extremely handsome, lovely, charming form, due to (i.e. seeing) which goddess Urvaśī, the divine lady, loved him. The king who had obtained the boon, being blessed, went to his city. "Knowing the way of one's acts to be like this, why are you afflicted, O vidyādhara? If you too desire to give up this ugliness of a demon, then, on my words only, quickly take bath in the water of the river Maṇikūṭa which removes old sins, and which is resorted to by sages, siddhas and gods in the month of Māgha. I shall tell you its manner. Due to your (good) luck, Māgha is near, (commencing) on the fifth day (from today). Beginning with the Ekādaśī of Pauṣa, and sleeping on a bare ground, and going without food, bathe three times (a day) for a month and worship Viṣṇu three times (a day), giving up pleasures and restraining your senses till the Ekādaśī in the bright half of Māgha, O best vidyādhara. Then, O god, O sinless one, having sprinkled you with auspicious water purified with hymns, I shall make the face of you who will have completely burnt your sins, resembling the face of Cupid on the holy day of Dvādaśī. O best vidyādhara, then having the face like that of a god, sport as you like, with this (lady) of an excellent complexion. You who have known the prowess of Māgha, always bathe in Māgha, so that your desires will be always fulfilled." That noble and omniscient Bhṛgu, having thus spoken to him, recited to him the (following) verse:

152-164. "By means of baths in Māgha, calamities perish. By means of baths in Māgha sins perish. Māgha is superior to all sacrifices, and gives the fruit of (all kinds of) charity. Māgha roars (louder) than sacrifices. Māgha roars (louder) than abstract meditation. And O vidyādhara, Māgha roars (louder) than severe penance. The fruit which men obtain by (observing) restraints

for ten years at Puṣkara, Kurukṣetra, Brahmāvarta having profuse water, at Avimukta, Prayāga, confluence of Gaṅgā and the ocean, is obtained by bathing for three days in Māgha. There is no doubt. Those, in whose mind there is, for a long time, interest in heaven, should bathe in water anywhere when the Sun is in Capricornus. Those who desire to have qualities like (long) life, (good) health, wealth, handsomeness, good fortune, should not give up bathing in Māgha. So also those who are afraid of hell, of poverty that is heaped, should by all means bathe in the month of Māgha. O best king, for washing off the mud of poverty, sins and bad luck, there is no other remedy than a bath in Māgha. Acts done without faith give small fruits. (But) a bath in Māgha gives the entire fruit. He who, with or without a desire, bathes anywhere outside (his house) in water, does not have sorrows in this or in the next world. As in the two fortnights the Moon waxes and wanes, in the same way in Māgha sins decrease and the heap of religious merit increases. As various gems come up from a mine, so religious merit of men springs up due to a bath in Māgha. As the desire-yielding cow fulfils the desire, or the desire-yielding gem gives the desired object, so a bath in Māgha fulfils all desires in the world.

165-166. Penance is the best in Kṛtayuga, knowledge in Tretāyuga, sacrifice in Dvāpara, knowledge (devotion?) in Kaliyuga, and Māgha in all the ages. The bath in Māgha, O king, showers with the streams of merit all the castes and the stages of life."

Vasiṣṭha said:

167-171. Having heard these words of Bhṛgu, that divine being along with Bhṛgu only bathed according to the manner told (in sacred texts) with his wife in that hermitage on the mountain on the bank of a river in Māgha. Then having secured, through the grace of Bhṛgu, what was desired by his mind, he having a divine face, rejoiced on the Maṇi-mountain. Bhṛgu, having favoured him (and so) delighted came (back) to Vindhya. The vidyādhara, merely by bathing on the lord of mountains full of gems in Māgha, had his face and form like those of Cupid. Bhṛgu too, having his body emaciated due to restraints, got down at the foot of Vindhya and came to Revā along with his disciples. O

king, this importance of Māgha, the essence in the world, was told by the excellent brāhmaṇa Bhṛgu to the vidyādhara. He who listens to it, wonderful due to various fruits, would always secure all his charming desired objects like a deity.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYSIX

The Importance of Māgha As Told by Dattātreya

Vasiṣṭha said:

1-2. O best king, now I shall tell you the importance of Māgha told by Dattātreya to Kārtavīrya who had asked (him about it). The king, the lord of Māhiṣmatī, went to that brāhmaṇa Dattātreya (who was) actually Viṣṇu, who lived on the Sahya mountain, and asked him (about the bath in Māgha).

Sahasrārjuna said:

3. O revered one, O best among the meditating saints, I have heard (about) all practices. O you of a good vow, favour me and tell me about the fruit of the bath in Māgha.

Dattātreya said:

4-18. O best king, listen to the auspicious answer to this question. This was formerly told by Brahmā to the illustrious Nārada. I shall tell you the great, entire fruit of the bath in Māgha according to the region, holy place, manner and rites. In this Bhāratavarṣa, especially in the land of religious rites the existence of those who do not have the bath in Māgha is said to be fruitless. A good act does not shine without the bath in Māgha, as the sky without the Sun or the cluster of stars without the Moon, O king. Viṣṇu is not so much pleased with vows, gifts, austerities as he is pleased just with a bath in Māgha. No (other) lustre resembles the Sun's lustre. Similarly the sacrificial rites do not resemble the bath in Māgha. A man should (daily) take a bath in Māgha to please Viṣṇu, to remove all sins, and for obtaining heaven. What is the use of preserving the well-nourished,

strong, uncertain, and impure body, if it would be without a bath in Māgha? The body is supported by bones, bound by sinews, besmeared with flesh and blood, covered with skin, has a bad smell and is a receptacle of urine and feces. It is pervaded by old age, affliction and calamities. It is an abode of diseases; it is sick; it is covered with dust. It is perishable. It is the abode of all blemishes. It torments others and is afflicted by torment. It deceives others. It is a great (i.e. strong) poison. It is greedy; it is wicked, cruel; it is ungrateful and momentary also. It is difficult to be filled, difficult to be borne, wicked, and is attended by the vitiation of the three humours. It is impure, exuding; it has cavities, and is deluded by the three humours. It is naturally engaged in impious acts. It is full of hundreds of desires. It stands at the gates of hell due to sexual desire, anger and great greed. It is full of worms and feces. It is reduced to ashes. It is, in effect, an oblation to dogs. Such a body is useless without (i.e. if it does not have) the bath in Māgha. Those who go without the bath in Māgha are born to die only like bubbles in water or pus in beings.

19-25. A brāhmaṇa not devoted to Viṣṇu is doomed. A srāddha without a meditating saint is worthless. A place which is unholy is worthless. A family without (good) practices is accursed. Religious practices accompanied by hypocrisy are worthless. Penance is doomed just by anger. Unstable knowledge is worthless. Learning is doomed by errors. A woman not devoted to the elders is wretched. A celibate is spoilt by her. Sacrifice into a fire that is not blazing is worthless. Enjoyment without a witness (i.e. companion) is worthless. A daughter affording a livelihood is condemned. Cooking for oneself is condemned. A sacrifice depending upon (articles) begged from a śūdra is worthless. Knowledge without practice is worthless. One opposing the king is doomed. A holy place (resorted to) for livelihood is worthless. A vow (undertaken) for livelihood is condemned. Speech void of truth is worthless; so also is calumny. An ambiguous hymn is worthless. Muttering prayers with a distracted mind is worthless. A gift (given) to a brāhmaṇa who is not learned, is worthless. Atheists are condemned. All that is done without faith for being useful in the next world is accursed.

26-39. O king, as this world is of no use for the poor, so the existence of men without the Māgha bath is accursed. How would he who does not bathe before sunrise when the Sun is in the sign of Capricornus, be freed from sins, or would go to heaven? A killer of a brāhmaṇa, he who would steal gold, a drunkard, he who violates his teacher's bed (i.e. wife) and the fifth one—their companion (i.e. abettor), become free from sin by bathing in Māgha. In the month of Māgha the waters shout somewhat (like this): We shall purify the killer of a brāhmaṇa, so also a drunkard who is trembling. When a man takes the Māgha bath, all his minor sins, so also all his major sins are reduced to ash. At the (time of) the union with the Māgha bath all sins tremble: 'This is the time of our destruction if he will bathe in the water.' Seeing a man ready to bathe (in Māgha) the sins cry like this. The best men shine like fires due to Māgha baths. They are free from all sins like the Moon from the clouds. The Māgha bath would burn sins—deliberate, non-deliberate, minor, major, and committed through speech, mind or (physical) act. The Māgha bath would burn sins as the fire (burns) the sacred fuel; so also a sin due to error committed knowingly or unknowingly. That would perish just by a bath when the Sun is in the (sign of) Capricornus. The sinless ones go to heaven; the most sinful are purified. O king, no doubt should be entertained about this Māgha bath. O king, all are entitled to (a bath) in Māgha as they are to the devotion to Viṣṇu. Māgha (bath) gives heaven to all; removes the sins of all. It is in itself a great hymn. It is in itself a great penance. That excellent bath in Māgha is a great expiation. Men have an inclination for Māgha bath after a practice for many existences, as, O king, proficiency in metaphysical knowledge (comes) after practice for many existences. O king, the Māgha bath is efficacious in washing off the smearing by mud in the form of the worldly existence.

40-41a. O king, the Māgha bath is the most purifying of all the purifying (objects). O king, how can those (men) who don't bath in Māgha which gives the fruits of all desires, enjoy pleasures like the planets Sun and Moon ?

41b-52. O king, listen to the great wonder due to the Māgha bath. A good brāhmaṇa lady, Kubjikā by name, belong-

ing to the Bhṛgu family, was afflicted by widowhood since her childhood; she practised a very difficult penance. At a great holy place, at the confluence of the Revā and Kapilā at the foot of Vindhya, observing a vow, and being highly devoted to Viṣṇu, she was always engaged in good practices, and always (living) without any company, had subdued her senses, her anger, spoke the truth, and talked little. She was of a good character, was given to charity and to parching up her body. Having offered oblations into the fire to her dead ancestors, deities and brāhmaṇas, she took food at the sixth time (i.e. once in three days), and always lived by gleaning grains; and by means of such vows as Kṛcchra, Atikṛcchra, Pārāka, Taptakṛcchra and others, she passed the auspicious months on the bank of Narmadā. In this way the lady, practising penance, wearing bark-garments, of a good character, of an extremely good disposition, and endowed with courage and contentment, bathed for sixty Māgha months at the confluence of Revā and Kapilā. O king, then she, emaciated due to the penance, died at that holy place. (And) due to that religious merit from the Māgha bath she lived in joy for four thousand yugas in Viṣṇu's city. Then, for the destruction of Sunda and Upasunda, she was again born from Brahmā's heaven, as Tilottamā. Due to the religious merit that was left, she was the sole object of beauty (i.e. was most beautiful). She, not born from the womb, the gem of a lady, deluding even the gods, the pool of beauty, slim, was the best among the celestial nymphs.

53-67a. She indeed caused wonder to the skilful creator Brahmā. The creator, having created her, was delighted; and then ordered her: "O you having (bewitching) eyes like those of a young one of a deer, quickly go for the destruction of the demons." Then that beautiful lady took a lute, went from Brahmā's heaven along the path by Puṣkara, to the place where the enemies of the gods (stood). Having bathed there in pure, clean water of Revā, she put on a red garment bright like the Badhūka flowers; her bracelets were jingling, and her girdle and anklets were sweetly tinkling. The necklace of pearls round her neck was moving; she was beautiful due to the unsteady earrings; she had worn the wreath of spring flowers; she stood by an aśoka tree. She sang with sweet tunes; she struck (the strings

of) her lute; she passed from one key to another of the six (keys of gamut), with smoothness, delicacy and with low and inarticulate tones. Thus that young Tilottamā stood in the Aśoka-grove. She, giving pleasure like a digit of the Moon, was seen by the demon-soldiers. Seeing her, the soldiers being delighted and without (properly) observing her, very quickly went to Sunda and Upasunda. Describing her again and again, they told about her in confusion: "O demons, we do not know whether she is a goddess or a demoness, or whether she is a nāga lady or a yakṣa lady, but she is by all means a gem of a lady. You two enjoy gems in the world, and that lady is a gem. She who removes sorrow, is under the aśoka tree, not far (from here). Go and quickly see her, deluding even Cupid." Hearing these charming words of their generals, the two abandoned their glass of liquor, gave up sprinkling with water, left thousands of excellent ladies, and from that lake they went, each one taking a separate mace that weighed a hundred bhāras, that was made of iron, that was hard, that resembled the staff of Death, speedily by jumping to that place where the passionate lady ready with a dress suited to amorous interviews had stood, as it were inflaming the fire of the passion of love of the two demons, O king.

67b-80. The two villains, infatuated by her beauty stood in front of her (and) especially being intoxicated due to liquor, said to each other: "O brother, wait, let me have this lady of an excellent complexion as my wife." "O good one, leave her—my wife—of bewitching eyes." Thus inflamed with strong attachment, and furious like elephants they, ordered by Death, struck each other with a mace, and by the strokes of each other fell down dead on the earth. Seeing them dead, the soldiers made a great noise: "Who is this, resembling the night of Death? What is this that has come up?" When (the soldiers in) the armies were speaking like this, Tilottamā, dropped Sunda and Upasunda on the peak of the mountain, and illumining the ten quarters she quickly proceeded to the sky. Having done the mission of the gods, she came to Brahmā. Then the delighted god approved of her (mission). "O you moon-faced one, I have allotted you a place on the Sun's chariot. Enjoy many pleasures as long as the Sun remains in the sky." O king, that brāhmaṇa lady

having thus become an excellent celestial nymph, even now enjoys the great fruit of the Māgha bath in the other world. Therefore, O king, men having faith (and desiring) to go to the best position, should always through effort bathe when the Sun is in Capricornus. There is no goal of human life not attained, there is no sin that is not destroyed of the man who bathes in Māgha. All sacrifices with presents are not equal to the Māgha bath, and especially at a holy place, O king, since, on the earth there is no other act giving heaven, or destroying sins, or giving salvation like the Māgha bath.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYSEVEN

The Release of a Demon

Kārtavīrya said:

1-2. O brāhmaṇa of a good vow, tell me for which reason great efficacy is said (to exist) in Māgha. Also I wish to know the religious merit (collected) of a bath in Māgha by one of which the merchant was free from his sins and by another he went to heaven.

Dattātreya said:

3-26a. O best among men, water is naturally holy, clear, undefiled, whitish, removing dirt, causing (things) to melt, removing heat; it preserves all beings, nourishes them and is their (very) life. In all Vedas water is spoken of as the god Nārāyaṇa. As among the planets the Sun is the greatest, as among the stars the Moon is the best, so is Māgha among (all) months for all rites. In Māgha, when the Sun is in Capricornus, a morning bath in clear water even in a small puddle gives heaven even to sinners. In Māgha, O king, this combination is rare in the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile. During this combination even a weak person should bathe (in the morning) for three days and, even if incapable, should, with a desire for freedom from poverty, give something (to a

brāhmaṇa). Rich men live long by bathing thrice in Māgha. Or (they should bathe) for five or seven days. The fruit increases like (the waxing of) the Moon. When, the auspicious time of the Sun being in Capricornus, which gives religious merit to men, has come, all the days should be equally valued for acts like a bath or giving (gifts). To the doer (of the acts) they cause to give an eternal, inexhaustible position. Therefore, for the desire of his own good, a man should bathe outside (his house) in Māgha. Hereafter, I shall tell (you) about the great rite of bathing in Māgha. The best men should take up some religious observance of the nature of a vow. A wise man should give up some eatable for getting excellence in the fruit. He should sleep on the bare ground. He should offer into fire ghee mixed with sesamum. He should worship the ancient Vāsudeva, Viṣṇu, three times (everyday). He should offer a lamp (burning) continuously, dedicating it to Viṣṇu. (He) should (also) give fuel, a blanket, a garment, sandals, saffron and ghee. (So also) oil, heap of cotton, cotton bed, cotton wicks, cloth, so also food, according to his capacity in Māgha, O king. Similarly he should give gold weighing a rati to (a brāhmaṇa) proficient in the Vedas. Like the ocean the gift is always inexhaustible. He should not eat others' food (i.e. food offered by others). He should give up receiving gifts; at the end of Māgha he should feed brāhmaṇas according to his capacity, O king. Desiring his own good, he should offer them presents. He, having faith, should, by observing the Ekādaśī rite, conclude (the vow) of Māgha with a desire (to live) eternally in heaven, to get unending religious merit, and to please Viṣṇu. In Māgha, when the Sun is in Capricornus, he, having uttered the prayer, 'O god Govinda, Acyuta, Mādhava, give me the fruit as is told (in the holy texts) as a result of this bath', should silently and being calm bathe and should again remember Vāsudeva, Hari, Kṛṣṇa, Mādhava (i.e. Viṣṇu). Even in his house he should keep a pitcher full of water touched by air (i.e. kept in the open) at night. A bath with that (water) is like one at a holy place, giving all desired objects. With (i.e. by taking) a vow he should give (articles) with food and condiments. Due to the efficacy of that bath a man would not go to hell. That bath which men take with hot water at home when the Sun is in Capricornus, gives

fruit for six years. But a bath outside (the house), in a well etc. is said to give fruit for twelve years. A bath in a lake gives double the fruit, (while a bath) in a river gives four times the fruit. (A bath) in a natural pond gives hundred times the fruit, (so also) a hundred times in a great river; and a bath at the confluence of a great river has four hundred times the fruit.

26b-40. O king, a man merely by bathing in Gaṅgā gets a thousandfold fruit of this, when the Sun is in Capricornus. O best king, those who bathe in Gaṅgā in the month of Māgha, do not fall from heaven for (a period of) a thousand aggregates of the four ages. O king, a man who bathes in Gaṅgā in Māgha, has given a thousand (coins) of gold everyday. O best king, the sages have ordained that the bath in Māgha at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā is a hundred thousand times (fruitful). O king, the lord of beings, engaged in the welfare of the worlds, fashioned Prayāga for burning the great burden of heaps of sins. Listen properly. This place having black and white water is formerly made for the beings in the form of sins (i.e. sinful). He, though full of hundreds of sins, who would bathe at (Prayāga having) black and white water in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus, does not sink in a womb (i.e. is not reborn). Even that man engaged in killing at a slaughter house, who would bathe at Prayāga, goes to the highest position, O best among men. The creator created that, viz. the black and white stream, filled with Sarasvatī, as a path to Viṣṇu's world. Viṣṇu's illusion is difficult to cross. It is not easily overcome even by gods. But, O king, it is burnt at Prayāga in Māgha. By bathing at Prayāga in Māgha men, after having many pleasures in lustrous worlds, merge into the Disc-holder (i.e. Viṣṇu). Even Citragupta is not able to measure the religious merit of him who bathes in the black and white water at Prayāga in Māgha when the Sun is in the Capricornus. Even Brahmā is not able to describe the greatness of the religious merit of him who bathes at Prayāga in the black and white water in Māgha when the Sun is in Capricornus. That fruit which is had by fasting for a hundred years is had by bathing for three days at Prayāga in Māgha. That fruit which is obtained by the gift of gold weighing a thousand bhāras at Kurukṣetra is had by bathing daily at

the place where Gaṅgā joins Yamunā and receives underground Sarasvatī in Māgha when the Sun is (in Capricornus).

41-51. O king, the fruit of a thousand Rājasūya sacrifices is not so complete as that of the baths in Māgha at Prayāga (where the water) is black and white. O best king, all the holy places that there are on the earth, so also the seven (holy) cities, come to bathe at the confluence of the three rivers (Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī) in Māgha. Due to the blemish of the contact with the sinners all holy places are darkened. Due to bathing in Māgha at Prayāga they get a white complexion (i.e. are purified). The sin collected from the beginning of the kalpa, and during (many) existences of those bathing at Prayāga is reduced to ash, O king. The sin of a man due to speech, mind and body, who has bathed for three days at Prayāga in Māgha would certainly perish. A man who bathes for three days at Prayāga in Māgha, sheds off his sin as a serpent does his slough, and goes to heaven. Gaṅgā bathed in anywhere is like Kurukṣetra. When it is united with Vindhya it is ten times more meritorious. Gaṅgā flowing northwards in (i.e. by) Kāśī is hundred times superior. Gaṅgā in confluence with Yamunā is hundred times superior to Kāśī (i.e. to what she is at Kāśī). She flowing westwards would be a thousand times superior to those, which, O king, merely by her sight removes the sin of the murder of a brāhmaṇa. O king, that (stream of) Gaṅgā flowing westward and joining Yamunā destroys sins committed in crores. It is difficult to have (a bath in) her in Māgha. That which is called nectar is said to be the confluence of the three rivers on the earth. (To bathe) in it even for a short time in Māgha is difficult even for gods.

52-58a. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Rudras, Ādityas, the host of Maruts, Gandharvas, Regents of Quarters, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Pannagas (i.e. serpents), so also those who are endowed with the supernatural powers like aṇimā (i.e. reducing the body to an atomic size), those who are the expounders of the true nature (of things), so also Brahmāṇī, Pārvatī, Lakṣmī, Śacī, Menā, Aditi and Diti—all these wives of gods, so also the Nāga females, similarly the hosts of the celestial damsels like Ghṛtācī, Menakā, Rambhā, Urvaśī and Tilottamā, and the hosts of the dead ancestors—all these come to bathe at the confluence of

the three rivers in Māgha, O king. (They come to bathe) in their own forms in Kṛtayuga, and with their forms concealed in Kaliyuga. That fruit which is obtained by a man by means of bathing in Māgha at Prayāga for three days, is not obtained by (performing) a thousand horse-sacrifices on the earth. Formerly Kāñcanamālinī gave the fruit of bathing in Māgha for three days to a demon, O king. The sinner got free (from sins) due to that.

Kārtavīrya said:

58b-59. O revered one, who is that demon? Who is that Kāñcanamālinī? How did she give him her religious merit? What good position did he have? If you think it is fit to be heard by me—for I have a great curiosity (to hear it)—then, O best of the meditating saints, O sun to the progeny of Atri, tell it (to me).

Dattātreya said:

60-68. O king, listen to this wonderful, ancient account by merely recollecting which a man would get the fruit of a Vājapeya. Kāñcanamālinī, a celestial nymph endowed with beauty, (used to) bathe at Prayāga in the month of Māgha and go to Śiva's temple. That old demon, standing in the form of a huge rock in a bower on the lordly mountain, saw her to have gone up into the sky. She was bright, resembled bright gold (in complexion); her buttocks were round; her eyes were long (i.e. large); her face resembled the moon; her hair was good; her breasts were raised and plump. Seeing her endowed with beauty, the demon said to her: "O you having eyes like lotus-petals, wherefrom do you come? Why is your garment wet? Due to what is your braid wet? O timid one, whence do you come? Due to what can you move in the sky? O good one, due to what religious merit is your body lustrous, endowed with great beauty, and charming? O you of fine eyes, due to the drops (of water) having fallen from your garment on my head my mind which is always cruel has become tranquil (just) in a moment. Please tell me, what great efficacy the water has. You appear to me of a good character. A (fine) figure is never without virtues."

The celestial nymph said:

69-86. O demon, listen. I am a celestial nymph taking any form I like. I have come from Prayāga. My name in Kāñcanamālinī. The cloth worn round my loins is wet, since I have well-bathed at Prayāga. O demon, I have to go to Kailāsa, the best mountain. There lives Pārvatī's lord, well-worshipped by gods and demons. O demon, your cruelty has gone due to the efficacy of the water at the confluence of the three rivers. I shall tell you all that religious merit by means of which I was born as the daughter of a divine form to the gandharva, Sumedhas. I was a courtesan of the king—the lord of Kaliṅga. I was endowed with a good form and beauty; I was madly proud of my good fortune. In his city I was the crest-jewel (i.e. best) of other young ladies. O demon, in that existence, I enjoyed pleasures as I liked. Due to the excellence of my beauty I deluded the entire city. I, having a bewitching form, obtained all this—gems, beautiful ornaments, and wealth; so also garments of various kinds, camphor and agaru sandal. O demon, in my house I did not know end (i.e. limit) to gold. Youths, oppressed by passion of love, shampooed my feet. All those were fraudulently duped by me (and deprived) of their wealth. Some lustful ones died as a result of vying with one another. In this way I moved in that entire beautiful city. But when old age came, my heart grieved. I had not given (gifts). I had not offered oblations into fire. I had not observed any vow. I had not propitiated any god giving the four goals (of human life). I had not worshipped Durgā who destroyed misery. I, greedy of enjoyments, had not remembered Viṣṇu who destroyed all sins. I had not gratified brāhmaṇas. I had done no good to beings. Through carelessness I did not practise merit even of the size of an atom. But, O good one, I had committed sins. Therefore, my mind burnt. Having moaned like this in many ways, I sought the refuge of a brāhmaṇa, the priest of the king, who was pious and was proficient in the Vedas. O demon, I asked him: "How would I atone for this sin? O best brāhmaṇa, how would I go to (i.e. obtain) the best position (i.e. salvation). You, seizing the hair of me who am tormented by my own acts, who am helpless, whose mind is afflicted, who am sunk into the mud of sins, lift me up. Oh!

shower on me a pleasing look, the water of pity. All are good to a good man. But a good man is good (even) to a bad man." Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) me, he favoured me. The brāhmaṇa spoke pleasing words, full of all piety.

The brāhmaṇa said:

87-97. O you beautiful lady, I have understood all your behaviour which was (really) prohibited. Do quickly what I say. Go to the holy place of Brahmā. Having gone there, have a bath. Thereby your sin will perish. O good lady, all your thoughts have pained me. I do not see any other expiation, destroying sins (than) a bath at a holy place which is said to be excellent by the sages. One should give up at a holy place even an impious act done mentally. Purified by a bath at Prayāga you will surely go to heaven. There is no doubt that men obtain (i.e. go to) heaven merely by means of a bath at Prayāga. O beautiful young lady, the sin committed at any other place than a holy place perishes at Prayāga. O timid one, listen. Formerly Indra had approached the wife of (the sage) Gautama. Seeing her he was overcome with passion; the libidinous one approached her secretly. Due to that severe sin the same fruit was produced. The body of Indra, going to (i.e. cohabiting with) the sage's wife, became, in her presence, censurable, condemnable and shameful. Due to the efficacy of her husband's curse it was marked with pudenda muliebre. Then, with his face hung down (in shame), the king of gods went from that place. He, subdued and ashamed, condemned his act. Having gone to Meru's peak, full of water and extending over a hundred yojanas, he entered the bud of a golden lotus. Remaining there he censured himself and Cupid.

98-113a. Fie upon that lust, which at once gives (i.e. produces) sin, and due to which, a man condemned by the entire world, goes to hell! So also it destroys (a man's) life, fame, glory, piety and courage. Fie upon Cupid, of a bad conduct, and the sure place of calamities, living in the body, an enemy difficult to be vanquished, not contented, and always uncontrollable!. Thus Indra, concealed in the lotus-abode, talked. O timid one, heaven did not look charming without Indra. Therefore, gods with Gandharvas, regents of quarters with Kinnaras,

came with Śacī to Bṛhaspati and asked him: "Revered sir, we do not know (where) god Indra (has gone). Where does he stay, where has he gone, where shall we look for him? With the gods (but) without him, heaven does not look charming, as a virtuous family without a good son. Immediately think about a remedy by which heaven will look charming. He, the lord, is endowed with great glory. Delay is not proper here." Hearing these words of them Bṛhaspati said (these) words: "I know where he stays as a result of his own guilt. That Indra undergoes the fruit of his act done rashly. Terrible effects would take place due to men's giving up the right course. Oh, being mad with pride of (possessing) a kingdom, he, not thinking what ought not to be done, did (this) censurable act, destroying the (effects of) visible and invisible (acts). The childish ones, with their minds impaired do (acts) due to which fault the existence in this world and in the next would be fruitless. We shall now go to the place where Indra is." On his speaking like this, all led by Bṛhaspati set out. Seeing the grove (i.e. bed) of golden lotuses in a vast lake, they praised the king of gods in such a way that he would awake, Then due to the awakening done by Bṛhaspati, he came out of the lotus-bud. With a melancholy face, and deformed, with his eyes contracted due to shame, he seized the feet of Bṛhaspati who was elder (brother). "O Bṛhaspati, protect me; tell me the atonement for this sin."

113b-131a. Hearing the words of the king of gods, the brāhmaṇa, Bṛhaspati, spoke: "O lord of gods, listen, I shall tell you a remedy destroying your sin. By taking a bath only in Prayāga you will be instantly free from the sin. O lord of gods, with you only we shall go there." Then coming with the priest, Indra bathed at the holy place, Prayāga, and was instantly freed from sins. The preceptor of gods, being pleased, gave him a boon: "O sinless one, merely by a bath at Prayāga, your sin has vanished. O Śakra, due to my grace, you whose sin has perished, will have a thousand eyes in place of these thousand vulvas." Just then, by the words of Bṛhaspati the lord of Śacī shone (there) with the thousand eyes like the Mānasa lake with lotuses. Then all the deities and sages worshipped him. And being praised by Gandharvas, Indra went to Amarāvatī. Thus Indra became free from sins at Prāyāga. O auspicious one, you

too go to Prayāga, resorted to by gods for instant destruction of sins and certainly going to heaven.

Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him along with the account and auspiciousness, then only I was confused, and saluting the feet of the brāhmaṇa, and leaving all my kinsmen and male and female servants and the house, so also all objects of senses like poisonous morsels, and, O demon, clearly noticing that the body is perishable after a moment, I went out. O best demon, being tormented in the heart with a terrible fire of falling into the ocean of hell, I went to (Prayāga) where the water is white and black, and bathed there. O old demon, listen to the greatness of that bath. Within three days the sins perished, and after the remaining twentyone days the religious merit had been (formed) due to which I obtained godhead. I enjoyed on Kailāsa as Pārvatī's dear friend. Due to the prowess, I remembered my birth also. Remembering the greatness of Prayāga, I go there in every Māgha. O demon, I have told you the entire account, which you with an amazed mind had asked, to please you. O demon, to please me (now) tell me your account. Due to which act have you become deformed and terrible, having moustache, long fangs, and eating raw flesh in the mountain-cave?

The demon said:

131b-137. A good person affectionately gives a desired thing or takes it, tells or asks a secret. O good lady, all that exists (i.e. is found) in you. O you lady of beautiful eyes, honoured by you I think the atonement (of the sins) of me, doer of cruel acts, will instantly take place. Therefore, O good lady, I shall tell you the bad act which I myself did. A man would be completely happy after reporting his grief to a good man. O beautiful lady, listen. I was formerly born in Kāśī as an excellent brāhmaṇa having (studied) many ṛks, and proficient in the Vedas, in a great and very pure family. O timid one, I received gifts, from the wicked—which act was fearful—from sinful kings, śūdras and vaiśyas also. I was prevented in many ways and many times, and was very much censured. Wicked gifts were not refused by me even from a cāṇḍāla. There was another sin

of (i.e. committed by) me of a foolish mind. There was no sinful act which I did not do.

138-150a. O you of an excellent complexion, listen to another drawback of that holy place. The sin of the size of an atom (committed) in Avimukta would attain (the size of) Meru. During that existence, I did not collect any (kind of) religious merit. Then, O beautiful lady, I died after a period of many days. Due to the power of Avimukta I did not go to hell. No sinner dying at Avimukta goes to hell. Any sin committed at Avimukta certainly becomes adamantine. Due to that adamantine sin I was born as a demon—fearful, very cruel, and sinful—on the snow mountain. Formerly I was twice born in the stock of vulture, thrice as a tiger, twice as a serpent, once as an owl, and after that as a hog. O you beautiful lady, this my birth as a demon is tenth. Of (this) my birth thousands of years have passed. O good one, I am not escaping from this ocean of misery. Here I have made (the region up to) three yojanas devoid of beings. I have destroyed many sinless beings, O you of beautiful eye-brows, due to that act my mind is constantly burning. My mind, sprinkled with the nectar of your sight, has become cool. A holy place gives its fruit after (some) time; (but) contact with the good (gives fruit) instantly. Therefore, O beautiful lady, the wise recommend the company of the good. I have told you all this affliction lurking in my mind. O you beautiful lady, a good man whose mind is not afflicted, is rare. You know what is proper here. What more should I say? I am thinking as to how I can cross over this ocean of misery. The prosperity of the good is the source of livelihood to all; does the Milky Ocean give milk to a swan (only) and not to a crane also?

Dattātreya said:

150b-163. Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, Kāñcanamālinī having her mind melted with compassion, and deciding to give (him) her religious merit, said: "O demon, I shall make atonement (for your sin). Do not be grieved. Making a firm vow, I shall try to release you. Year after year I have duly taken (bath) in the month of Māgha. O good one, (I have bathed) with faith in the holy place of Prayāga. I am unable to tell the amount of that religious merit, O demon. The wise men

have said that piety should be secretly praised. The sages, proficient in the Vedas praise giving (gifts) to the afflicted. O good one, what fruit would there be for cloud showering (water) into the ocean. O demon, I have myself experienced the fruit due to that religious merit. O friend, I shall give you that (merit) which instantly destroys sin." Then she squeezed her (wet) garment, and took the water in her lotus-like hand. She gave the old demon (her) religious merit due to (the bath in) Māgha. O king, listen, strange is the prowess due to the religious merit (of bathing) in Māgha. Having thus received her religious merit, he was free from (i.e. he got rid of) the demonish body. He became one having the body of a deity, lustrous like the sun's form. With his eyes blooming with joy, he got into a divine vehicle. He then shone in the sky, illuminating the quarters with his lustre. He, having a divine form, shone like another sun. Then he congratulated that Kāñcanamālinī: "O good one, the powerful god who gives the fruit of acts, knows that obligation done by you to me, where no acquittal was possible. Even now, kindly be pleased and favour me. O respectable lady, give me auspicious instruction, full of morals, and causing all religious acts, so that I shall not commit a sin. Hearing that I, permitted by you, shall later go to the abode of gods."

Dattātreya said:

164-177. Having heard these words full of righteousness, uttered by him, Kāñcanamālinī told him very affectionately about the religious practice, O king: "Always practise a good course. Give up harming beings. Serve good men. Kill the enemy (in the form) of passion. Quickly giving up praising and censuring the virtues and vices of others, speak the truth. Worship Viṣṇu. Go to the world of gods (i.e. heaven). Give up your longing after the body full of bones, flesh and blood. Give up the sense of mineness for your wife, sons etc. Mark ceaselessly that this world is perishable. Being firm in abstract meditation, be interested in detachment. Through love for you, I have told you the path of piety. Bear all (this) in mind. Be one of a good character. Giving up your demonish body, taking up a divine body full of lustre, quickly and happily go to heaven." Hearing

about the religious practices, the demon, being pleased, said: "Be always joyful. May you always have well-being. As long as the Moon and the Sun last, enjoy at Kailāsa in Śiva's proximity. O you of an excellent complexion, may you have Pārvatī's constant love. O mother, always be devoted to piety and penance. May you not have longing after your body. Always remove the misery of the afflicted." Speaking like this to and saluting Kāñcanamālinī, that demon, praised by many gandharvas went to heaven. Then daughters of gods, full of joy, came and showered flowers on the head of that Kāñcanamālā. The girls embraced her and spoke sweet words: "O good one, you have done a wonder freeing the demon. Due to the fear of this (demon) no one entered the forest. Now, we, being fearless, shall move here as we like." O king, hearing their words, that Kāñcanamālinī, pleased with the gift (she gave) became (i.e. regarded herself as) blessed. Kāñcanamālinī, the best daughter of a gandharva, having quickly freed him, and full of obligations, went, playing with them, to Śiva's abode.

A man who would devoutly listen to the dialogue of that excellent girl (and the demon) is never troubled by demons, and has a great liking for piety.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYEIGHT

The Hymn Yogasāra in Praise af Viṣṇu

Vasiṣṭha said:

1-15. I have told you the importance of Māgha as narrated by Dattātreya. I shall now tell (you) which fruit Māgha bath has. O hero, Māgha bath is the best of all sacrifices; it gives the fruit of all gifts; it is equal to all vows and austerities. Men, due to Māgha bath (taken) with a pure mind, put the dead ancestors of both (the mother's and the father's) families in heaven, and themselves go to heaven in aeroplanes going according to the desire (of the occupants) along with ladies

of bright faces. Even those men who always commit sins, who are always engaged in bad practices, who go astray, but who bathe in Māgha and worship Viṣṇu, abandon a collection of great sins (committed) in this world. Even those men who are void of truth, who make their father and mother unhappy, who do not remain within (the limits) of the stages of life, who avoid the family practices, who are hypocrites, also get the position of the good due to the Māgha baths in this world. It is very difficult for men to get (an opportunity to have) a bath in the month of Māgha at holy places, since by that men obtain the position of the knowers of Brahman. No doubt should be raised about this. O king, in Māgha (practising) penance, (giving) gifts, muttering (hymns) and continuous worship of Viṣṇu and his temple is inexhaustible (in giving fruit). Therefore, men should strive to bathe and give garments, food and gold according to their capacity. A giver of food in Māgha drinks nectar in heaven. A giver of gold goes near Indra. A man who offers a lamp-fire, garments, is full of lustre, and always lives in the world of the Sun. Sinners are not so much purified in this world by sacrifices, good gifts, severe and bright austerities, following proper celibacy, worshipping (deities) and resorting to abstract meditation as by Māgha baths causing religious merit. Those sinners who bathe at holy places when the orb of the Sun has half come up in the month of Māgha, do not suffer from the torment of a series of miseries and the unbearable torment inflicted by Yama. Those who, after having bathed in Māgha, worship Viṣṇu, become, after falling from heaven, kings who are excellent, handsome, fortunate, sweet-speaking, righteous, very wealthy, and living for a hundred years. As a heap of pieces of wood offered into fire is reduced to ash just that moment, in the same way, due to Māgha bath the heap of great sins and a series of sins, though vile, melt away. The bath in Māgha would, like Viṣṇu existing in the heart, burn all that sin committed by men through body, speech or mind, so also the sin that is known (i.e. deliberate) or unknown. O king, when the Māgha bath is taken, the fruit of the sin (committed) inadvertently, which is being undergone, certainly perishes just at that moment. Formerly, O king, the gandharva-maidens undergoing suffering due to the

sin, were freed from that as a result of Māgha bath (taken) at the words of Lomaśa. It was wonderful.

Sūta said:

16-33. Hearing these words, the king joyfully saluted his lotus-like feet, and polite due to great faith, asked that priest: "O revered sir, tell me whence the maidens got the curse, whose children they were, what their names and ages were, how they were freed from the suffering due to the curse by Lomaśa's words, where did they bathe, and in what number?

Vasiṣṭha said:

O best king, listen to the great story full of religious merit, which is like the araṇi (i.e. the piece of wood used for kindling sacred fire) pregnant with fire and producing religious merit and fire. There was a gandharva (named) Sukhasaṅgīti. His daughter was Pramodinī. Suśīlā was Suśīla's (daughter); Susvarā that of Svaravedin; Sutārā of Candrakānta and Candrikā of Suprabha. O king, these were the excellent names of those celestial nymphs. All the five maidens were of the same age; they had, as it were, come out from the Moon, and were bright like moonlight. Their faces were (lovely) like the Moon. They had good (i.e. long) hair; their lips contained the ambrosia from the Moon. They gave delight to the eyes as moonlight to the water-lily. They were born with profuse beauty; they had charming forms; they were attractive; their pitcher-like breasts had come up (i.e. were raised) like the lotus-plants in spring. Like a creeper with fresh foliage they had charming youth spreading out. They were yellowish like gold; had golden lustre; were adorned with golden ornaments. They had put on garlands of campaka flowers; they had golden complexion; had put on good garments; they were skilled in notes of the musical scale, and scales in music, in various melodies, in beating time and amnsements, in playing upon the flute and the lute which accompanied the sound of the drums, in dances, in hobbies like drawing pictures and (other) arts. The maidens who were like this loved sporting in a grove. Fondled by their parents they moved in Kubera's abode. Once (all) the five coming together through curiosity in the month of Vaiśākha, collected mandāra flowers

from one grove and another and to propitiate Pārvatī some time went to the Acchoda lake. They took from that (lake) excellent golden lotuses along with excellent blue lotuses. Having bathed in the lake which was bright with lapis lazuli, clear like crystal and having corals, and having put on garments, they with the golden sand fashioned, observing silence, a solid image of Pārvatī with an altar. The maidens, full of devotion, honouring Pārvatī with sandal, camphor and saffron, and worshipping her (image) with excellent lotuses etc. and with various modes of worships, danced by beating time. Having resorted to the excellent note of gandhāra (i.e. the third note) with sweet sounds of strings and with good modulations, the deer-eyed sang a song, having sweet letters, charming theme, and sweet tunes due to turns.

34-50. To that excellent holy place of Acchoda which had sweet-sounds (of music), which gave sprinkling of delight and joy, Agnipa, the son of a sage, the treasure of Vedas, came to bathe when the maidens were dancing very freely. He was matchless in form; had an excellent face: his eyes were long like lotus-leaves; he was young; his chest was broad; his arms were good; he was very handsome; he had a darkish complexion. He was as it were another Cupid. That celibate, with a tuft of hair on the crown of his head, shone with his staff like Cupid with his bow. He had covered himself with deer-hide, had worn a good sacred thread, and had his girdle of muñja grass resembling gold. Seeing that brāhmaṇa, the maidens, full of curiosity, were delighted (asking themselves): 'who is this (welcome) guest to our eyes on the bank of the lake?' Leaving dancing and singing, they, pierced by Cupid with his arrows like female deer pierced with arrows by a hunter, were engrossed in looking at him. The five innocent ones, saying, with great excitement (to one another), 'See (him), see (him)' mistook that youth, the excellent brāhmaṇa, for the god of love. Again and again propitiating him (i.e. gazing on him) with their eyes like lotuses, the maidens then debated with one another: 'If he is the god of love, how would he go without Rati? Is he the (twin) deities Aśvins? But they indeed move as twins. Is he a gandharva, or a kinnara, or a siddha, taking any form at will? Or is he a son of a sage or some excellent man?

Whosoever he may be, he has been created for us by the Creator. As for the lucky ones a treasure is fashioned by (means of) their former deeds, in the same way this excellent bridegroom is brought for us—the maidens, by Pārvatī whose mind is moistened due to the flood of the large waves of the water of compassion. 'I have chosen him; you have also chosen him. As you have chosen him, so have I.' O best king, when the maidens were talking thus, he, having heard their words, performed the mid-day rites, and thought in his mind (i.e. to himself): 'This obstacle has come up. It is a wonder that gods like Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, so also the ancient sages and siddhas, powerful in abstract meditation, were easily deluded by women. Whose deer in the form of his mind, struck by the archer Cupid with the sharp arrows in the form of the eyes (i.e. glances) of women and going out from the very strong bow in the form of their creeper-like brows, does not fall? Men's morality shines, men would be afraid of people, the great strength of the mind would persist, the consideration of (their) family would be done, the maturity due to penance would persist, the maintaining of the vows of men would be done till men are not deluded by the arrows of the glances of women, with ardent passion.

51-53. Let women delude and madden the passionate ones with their charming amorous gestures. (But) by means of which qualities do these women delude and madden me, highly devoted to piety? May the passionate ones, with their hearts very much deluded, not take delight in the immodest, impure bodies of women, produced from flesh, semen, feces and urine, imagining them (to have) charm? The wise ones of pure minds have declared the contact of women to be fearful. Till they do not approach me, I will go home?'

54-67. Till the excellent maidens did not come (i.e. before they came) near him, the brāhmaṇa disappeared by means of his prowess due to Viṣṇu. Seeing that amazing act of the intelligent son of a sage, who had disappeared due to his magical power, the maidens with their eyes frightened, and afraid like female deer, and with their eyes confused and vacant, looked into the ten directions. To one another they said: "He clearly knows magic, or knows māyā, (since) though seen, he again disappe-

ared." Just then their hearts were pervaded with the fire of separation, like a very glossy, dense forest with blazing wild fire. 'O dear, giving up your practice of magic, quickly present yourself, united with our minds, and like a fly (falling) into a morsel before (it is put into the mouth), to us. Alas! why did the Creator show you to us? Why did he fashion you? Oh! we have understood it: You have been created to give (us) great torment. Is your heart cruel? Have you no mind (i.e. interest) in us? O dear, are you cunning? Are you stealing our mind? Do you have no faith in us? Are you testing us? Are you given to the art of joking? Are you proficient in trickery? Do you know the skill to enter into (other's) hearts? And do you not again know to get out of it? Are you angry with us without (our) fault? Do you know the affliction caused to others due to deception? O lord of (our) hearts, we won't now live without seeing you. And if we live, it is through the hope of seeing you again. Take us there where you have quickly gone. The Creator, depriving us of your sight has cut (our desire) just when it was a sprout. By all means appear (before us). By all means resort to pity. Good men do not at all see (i.e. do not go to) the extreme.'

68-70. Having wailed like this, and having waited for him for a long time, they quickly started moving towards home through the fear of their fathers. Bound by the chains of his love, very much afflicted due to separation from him, they somehow mustered courage and came home. All they came (home) and dropped (themselves) near fountains. They were asked by (their) mothers: "What is this? Why were you late?"

The maidens said:

71-80. As we were gladly sporting and singing with the kinnara-maidens at the lake, we were not conscious of (the particular time of) the day etc. O mothers, we were tired on the path, therefore, there is torment in our bodies. Due to great insensibility we are not able to speak.

Speaking like this the maidens rolled there on the jewelled floor. The perplexed ones concealing the expression of the face as giving a clue to their inward thoughts spoke with their mothers. Some one did not make the pet peacock dance with joy. Some other did not

teach the parrot in the cage through curiosity. Another one would not fondle the mongoose, or did not delight the sārikā. Another one, very much perplexed, did not play with cranes. They did not resort to amusements; they were not delighted at home. They did not much talk to their kinsmen. They did not play on the lute. They did not drink the juice of the flowers of desire-yielding trees, which was tasty like nectar, which was sweet, and fragrant with mandāra flowers. The maidens with their eyes fixed on the tips of their noses, remained like female devotees continuously concentrating on the Unknown and having Viṣṇu in their minds. For a moment they remained at the window, covered with the moon-stones and oozing drops of water, and at (another) moment they remained at the fountain. For a moment they arranged their beds with the petals of lotuses from the lakes. They were fanned by their friends with cold leaves of plantain trees.

81-91. Thus those excellent maidens thought one night to be equal to a yuga. Somehow they showed courage, (but) they were afflicted as if suffering from fever. Seeing the sun in the sky they thought of their life. Each one informing her own mother, they went to worship Pārvatī. Having bathed according to the rite, and having worshipped (Pārvatī) with flowers and incense as was proper, they remained there singing. In the meanwhile that brāhmaṇa also came from his hermitage to the Acchoda lake to bathe. The maidens seeing the celibate had their eyes bloomed, as the lotus plants (have the lotuses bloomed) on seeing the sun at night's end. Just then the maidens went near the celibate and bound him with the bonds of their left and right hands. "O cunning one, yesterday you had gone (i.e. you could go). You cannot go today. We have surrounded you. About this you should have no doubt." Thus addressed, the brāhmaṇa who was (caught) in the noose of their arms, laughed and said: "You are talking good, favourable, sweet words. But the vow of me staying in the first stage of life and devoted to Vedic studies in my preceptor's house, has not been completed. The wise should stick to the practice which (is prescribed) for a particular stage of life. Therefore, O maidens, I do not think that marriage would be a (proper) way (for me)." Hearing his

words, they, with a sweet but indistinct voice, like the cuckoos in spring, and with curiosity, spoke to him (these) words:

92-106: "The wise ones say that the sacred rule is fixed like this: Worldly prosperity (*Artha*) is born of righteousness (*Dharma*). From *Artha* springs *Kāma*. And the fruits of righteousness (*Dharma*) spring from sensual enjoyments (*Kāma*): That sensual enjoyment has stood before you due to the abundance of your righteousness. Enjoy it through various pleasures. This will then be heaven (only)." Hearing these words of them he spoke in a serious voice. "Your words are true; but having finished my vow in this (stage of life) and having obtained (my) preceptor's consent, I shall go through the complete rite of marriage. Not otherwise." They thus addressed, again said, "O handsome one, you are certainly ignorant. Excellent women are a divine medicine, are Brahmā's elixir, accomplishment of a treasure, excellent arts. They are a hymn, they (produce) a liking for success, and when they have approached, an intelligent man should not keep them off according to law. If an act is succeeding through (good) luck, the virtuous one does not ignore it. Since ignoring it is not fruitful, so, procrastination also is not recommended. (Only) fortunate men, and not others obtain maidens who have intense love, who are spotless due to being born in a (noble) family, whose hearts are soft with affection, who speak sweetly, who choose their grooms, who are beautiful, and whose youth is charming. What a great disparity there is between us—beautiful maidens—and this chap? I think the Creator is very clever in doing a difficult job. Therefore, do an auspicious thing now by accepting us in the gāndharva form of marriage. Otherwise we will not live." Hearing these words, the brāhmaṇa who knew well the customary observance said: "O you deer-eyed ones, how should men whose wealth is religious merit, abandon the customary observances? Righteousness, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment and salvation—these four (when practised) in (due) order are said to give (their) fruit. Opposite of this is fruitless. Therefore, I who have taken up a vow, would not marry at a wrong time. He who does not know the time of an act (i.e. the time when the act should be done) does not obtain its fruit. Since, O maidens, my mind is attached to religious thought, therefore, listen—I do not long after a self-choice

marriage." Having thus known his intention, and looking at one another, they left one another's hands, (and) Pramodinī seized his feet. Suśīlā and Susvarā seized his arms; Sutārā embraced him, and Candrikā kissed his face.

107-117. Yet the celibate remained uninterested; and resembling the fire at the time of the final deluge, and filled with great anger, he cursed them. "You clung to me like female imps. Therefore, you will be (i.e. turn into) female imps." Thus, they, quickly cursed by him, left him and stood (as) before. "O sinful one, what have you done this to innocent persons? Fie upon your righteousness, since you did an undesirable act when a desirable act should have been done. We have heard that the happiness of the man who bears malice against adorers that are attached and his friends, perishes in both worlds. Therefore, by our curse you too quickly become an imp." Speaking like this, those maidens, heaving sighs, smit with hunger, ceased (speaking). Then due to the anger towards one another all the maidens and that celibate became imps in that lake, O king. The female imps and the male imp, waiting ruthlessly, put an end to the fruit of the acts they had obtained formerly. O king, auspicious or inauspicious acts done before do give their fruit unavoidably even to gods, like one's (unavoidable) shadow. Their fathers and mothers, so also his (father and mother) wept there, (saying): "The children have not erred; destiny is difficult to be overcome." After that (i.e. since then), the imps, greatly pained in securing food, and running here and there, lived on the bank of the lake. When many days passed like this, Lomaśa, the best sage, came to the Acchoda lake to bathe on the fourteenth of Pauṣa.

118-128. Seeing that brāhmaṇa (i.e. Lomaśa), all the imps coming together and (thus) being in a group, and overcome with hunger, and desiring to kill him, ran (to him). Being burnt by his very bright lustre, they were unable to stand before him; and all of them remained away (from him). Just then there came the brāhmaṇa Vedanidhi. Having seen Lomaśa, O king, he saluted him touching the ground with the eight limbs of his body. Having put his folded palms on his head he spoke true and pleasant words: "O brāhmaṇa, (one) would have the company of the good, when there is (a possibility of) the dawn of good

fortune. Between the two, viz. a man who always bathes in holy places like Gaṅgā and who always keeps the company of the good the company of the good is better. O brāhmaṇa, the company of the venerable gives unseen and seen fruit on the earth. It gives (i.e. leads to) heaven; it removes diseases; but is said to be troublesome." Speaking like this, he told him the former, wonderful account. "These are gandharva-maidens. This chap is my son. O best sage, all deluded by cursing one another, stand in the form of imps with melancholy faces in front of you. By seeing you the children will be freed; does not the mass of darkness hide in a cave on sunrise?" O king, Lomaśa of great lustre, having heard it, had his mind moistened with pity and spoke to the sage, grieved for his son: "Due to my grace may the children's memory be revived at once. I am talking (words full of) virtue. The mutual curse would end."

Vedanidhi said:

129. O great sage, describe the virtuous practice due to which the children will be free. This is not time for delay, since the fire of the curse is fearful.

Lomaśa said:

130-145. Let them duly have Māgha bath with me. At the end of Māgha they will be free from the curse. Otherwise there would be no atonement. O brāhmaṇa, the fruit of the curse is sinful. The destruction of men's sin would take place by Māgha bath at a holy place. Thus I certainly think. Māgha bath, especially at a holy place, would burn all the sin committed during the seven previous existences and the present sin also. Even that sin for which the best sages do not see an expiation, would perish by the Māgha (bath) at holy places. Māgha (bath) at Mānasa produces knowledge. Due to that it gives salvation. It destroys all sins at the holy places on the Himālaya. The teachers of the Vedas have mentioned (Māgha bath) as giving (i.e. taking one to) Indra's heaven. Māgha (bath) at Badarīvana destroys all sins and gives salvation. (At a holy place on the bank) of Narmadā Māgha (bath) destroys sins and misery, fulfils all desires, gives (i.e. takes one) to Rudra's heaven and destroys sins. A Māgha bath in Yamunā would lead to the

Sun's world and destroy sins. One in Sarasvatī destroys sins and gives the fruit in the form of Brahmā's world. O best brāhmaṇa, the Māgha (bath) in the Viśālā (river) gives a large fruit. It is a wild fire to the fuel of sins, (and) destroys the effect of the cause of being conceived. A Māgha bath in Gaṅgā is said to lead to Viṣṇu's world and to salvation. Rivers like Śarayū, Gaṇḍakī, Sindhu, Candrabhāgā, Kauśikī, Tāpī, Godāvarī, Bhīmā, Payoṣṇī, Kṛṣṇaveṇikā, Kāverī, Tuṅgabhadrā and other rivers are there. A man bathing in any of them in Māgha quickly goes to heaven, after being free from sins. Māgha bath in Naimiṣa gives absorption into Viṣṇu, (and one) at Puṣkara takes a man near Brahmā. Due to (a bath) in Māgha at Kurukṣetra a man goes to Indra's world. A Māgha bath at Devahrada gives the fruit in the form of the divine powers obtained through abstract meditation. A man would be an attendant of Rudra by bathing at Prabhāsa when the Sun is in Capricorn. A man gets a divine body by bathing at Devakī in Māgha. O brāhmaṇa, by a bath in Gomatī, at Hemakūṭa, Mahākāla, Oṁkāra, Amareśvara there is no rebirth (for a man). A man is honoured in Rudra's heaven due to a bath in Māgha at Nīlakaṇṭha and at the confluence of all rivers when the Sun is in Capricorn.

146-155. By means of (such) a bath all the desires of human beings are fulfilled. O best brāhmaṇa, only the fortunate get an opportunity to bathe in Māgha at Prayāga, since the white and black water there gives freedom from rebirth. Gods dwelling in heaven always sing: 'We shall have a bath in Māgha at Prayāga, by having a bath at which place, men to do not see (i.e. experience) the pangs of (being conceived in) a womb and remain near Viṣṇu.' Those men, clothed in (i.e. full of) many sins, who bathe on a new-moon day at the holy place of Prayāga, are meritorious, do not go to hell, but gladly move like gods in an auspicious heaven. Formerly the Creator weighed the bath in Māgha at Prayāga with holy places, religious vows, gifts, austerities, and Māgha proved to be greater and therefore superior. That (highest) position which men get by bathing in Māgha, is not obtained by means of parching up their bodies through eating (i.e. subsisting on) air, water, or leaves, or through severe austerities collected over a long period, or by means of abstract

meditations. Does not a row of bees, struck by (the flappings of) the ears of elephants, adorn the doors of the houses of those who have bathed at the holy place of Prayāga at the confluence of the divine rivers (i.e. Gaṅgā with Yamunā) when the Sun rises (after entering) Capricorn? How is that Prayāga which after having easily destroyed the sins, gives greater fruit after a bath there, than the Rājasūya sacrifice or the horse-sacrifice, not resorted to by (men)? In the country of Avantī formerly there was a king (named) Vīrasena. Having come to the bank of Narmadā he performed a Rājasūya sacrifice. He duly performed sixteen horse-sacrifices adorned with golden courts, and rich in golden ornaments and tying posts. He gave heaps of grains resembling mountains to brāhmaṇas. He was liberal, a devotee of deities, a giver of cows and of gold.

156-167. There was a foolish brāhmaṇa of a mean family named Bhadraka. He was a farmer of wicked acts, and was excluded from all religious rites. He was fed up with agriculture; and his brothers had not performed any purificatory rites for him. Wandering here and there, he, being oppressed by hunger, went out (of the city). Luckily he got into (i.e. joined) a caravan, and came to Prayāga. He bathed there for three days in Māgha. Once both the king and the brāhmaṇa died. I saw that their condition was similar in the proximity of Indra. They had similar power of the form of lustre, similar group of ladies (attending upon them), similar divine vehicles, similar ornaments, a garland of pārijāta flowers, similar dance, and similar music. Such is the greatness of the holy place. How can it be described? The Māgha bath at Prayāga is said to be equal to (many) Rājasūya sacrifices, O brāhmaṇa. A man bathing in Māgha at (Prayāga), at the confluence of (Gaṅgā and Yamunā having) white and dark green water, is not reborn, (but) the performer of Rājasūyas would be reborn. Even the breezes in Māgha would touch the white and dark green water. They would not touch inauspicious things, for they indeed destroy great sins. O brāhmaṇa, what is the use of talking much in this case? O brāhmaṇa, listen for certain. Māgha would destroy the sin, the fruit of which has sprung up. In this (context) I shall tell you. Listen attentively. (Let the young celestial damsels listen to the ancient account of the liberation of the imps. Let your son also

listen to it. The imps, desiring salvation have obtained recollection through my grace.) Formerly, the brāhmaṇa Devadyuti, a devotee of Viṣṇu and master of the Vedas, with his mind flooded with kindness, liberated the imps.

Dilīpa said:

168-169. Where did he stay? Whose son was he? What was his vow? What prayers did he mutter? Due to what did he become a devotee of Viṣṇu? Which imps were liberated? O great sage, tell all this in detail; due to your grace we are hearing an interesting and very auspicious (account).

Vasiṣṭha said:

170-185. On the auspicious bank of Sarasvatī there is a holy pool called Plakṣa. His hermitage resorted to (i.e. was by) a charming mountain. (O king, the hermitage was beautiful due to) groves of good trees like śāla, tāla, tamāla, bilva, bakula, pāṭala, tintidī, ciri, bilva, mango, campaka, karañja, kovidāra, kesara eaten by elephants, tilaka, karṇikāra, kumbha, khadira, tinduka, vānīra, sālva, jambīra, pīlu, udumbara, reeds, śakota, atarupa, kārahāta and fig trees, ghoṇṭa, kūṭaja, palāśa, aśoka (trees) that removed sorrow, jambu, nimba, kadamba, kṣīrika, karamardaka, and bījapūra, nāriṅga, and adorned with rows of plantain trees, so also jack-fruit trees, and coconut trees always having tasty fruits; saptacchada, tripatra, śirīṣa, and auspicious āmalaka (trees), karkandhu, lakuca, akṣa, pāribhadra and others: ketaka, sinduvara, tagara, kunda, mallikā, white, red, blue lotus (creepers), (creepers of) mālatī and yūthikā (jasmine) mālati, mogara, jāti fruit, punnāga, kiṁśuka, barvari and tulasī-trees. O king, the hermitage was always charming due to trees of various kinds. Through the forest flows the river Sarasvatī of auspicious water. Cranes always warble there softly, sweatly and indistinctly due to ardent passion. Cuckoos coo there, and bees hum (there). O king, the forest is very noisy due to parrots and sārikās. Many wild beasts move in that best forest. The forest always has fruits and flowers, and has a dusty colour due to pollen, and is covered all round with aśoka trees. The charming forest is embraced on all sides by creepers with new foliage and sprouts that have

sprung up like a lover by his beloveds. Wind afraid of his curse blows on all sides. Clouds do not shower hail stones; the Sun does not dry up (the water). That forest is free from harm; it is inhabited by siddhas and non-siddhas; it always gave delight like the forest Caitraratha.

186-203. In that (forest) lived the pious, best brāhmaṇa, Devadyuti. The brāhmaṇa's son was Sumitra, obtained through the boon of Lakṣmī's husband. Listen to the vow of him who was always controlled. In summer he observed the vow called Pañca (-agni), and fixed his eyes on the Sun. He remained in the open space in the rainy season when the row of clouds showered; and when there was stormy wind blowing, he remained steady like the Himālaya (mountain). O brāhmaṇa, in winter he lived in a pool of Sarasvatī—in water; and during the season he sipped the pure water thrice a day. He everyday gratified his dead ancestors, deities and sages with faith. He always taught the Vedas, spoke the truth, and had curbed his senses. Resting on the (bare) ground, he, appealing to Viṣṇu, meditated on him. He offered oblations to fire with sylvan articles, and honoured guests with reverence. He always spent his time by practising Cāndrāyaṇa vow. He desired to subsist on leaves and fruits fallen on their own. He was not dejected; he was devoted to penance; he had mastered the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. He was frightful due to his veins (very much strained), and his body had just bones (left in it). In this way he passed a thousand years in the forest. Then the mountain was blazing due to the lustre of his penance. The beings could not bear the lustre of the noble one. O brāhmaṇa, blazing with penance he shone like fire. In that forest beings were free from enmity. Deer, tigers, mice and cats, free from fear, played with one another. Listen also to another vow of him difficult to be secured. Everyday he worshipped Viṣṇu three times with a thousand fragrant flowers that had bloomed. He was very much engrossed in meditating upon Viṣṇu according to the Vedic hymns. The brāhmaṇa performed every act to please Viṣṇu. Due to a boon given to him by Dadhīci he became an excellent devotee of Viṣṇu. Once on the Ekādaśī in the month of Vaiśākha the great sage after worshipping Viṣṇu offered a charming and lovely (hymn of) praise to him. Then only Viṣṇu mounted

the bird (i.e. Garuḍa), and being very much pleased by the praise, himself came before him. Seeing him mounted on Garuḍa, with the colour of his skin like the cloud, having four arms, large eyes, decorated with all ornaments, actually standing before him, the brāhmaṇa, with horripilation appearing (on his body) and with tears of joy, with his mind satisfied, (saluted him) with his head going down to (i.e. touching) the ground.

204-216. Due to that joy he could not contain himself even in the interior of the universe. He did not remember (i.e. was not conscious of) his body. He felt, as it were, he was one with Brahman. Then Viṣṇu affectionately spoke to the sage, Viṣṇu's devotee: "O Devadyuti, I know you are my devotee. You have sought my shelter. You have given up all acts. You are devoted to me. You always have me in your mind. I am pleased with this praise. Ask for a boon." Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, the ascetic replied: "O god of gods, O you lotus-eyed one, O you who have taken up a body through your divine power, there is no more difficult boon than (being able) to see you. All gods like Brahmā, and meditating saints like Sanaka, so also siddhas like Kapila, desire to see you in person. All bonds like ego, sense of mineness, so also delusion and greed—auspicious and inauspicious, entertained with a purpose, are burnt on seeing you, the highest one. I have obtained the fruit of my existence and deeds, and the fruit of my intellect has become manifest in that, O you lord of the world, you are seen by me. What other than this should I ask for? O lord of gods, I do not have your lotus-like feet in my heart for (securing) a boon. With my mind gone (i.e. devoted) to you, I always think of you with devotion. I ask for this boon only that my devotion to you should be steady. Let it be so, O lord of Lakṣmī. I do not ask for any other boon." Hearing these words of him, Viṣṇu, with his face bright, and with his mind pleased replied: "Let it be so, O best brāhmaṇa. The other (boon is): There will be no impediment to your austerities. Those men who will recite this hymn composed by you will have a firm devotion to me. Whatever religious act they (perform) will be complete. They will have a great unswerving faith in knowledge."

217. Speaking like this, Viṣṇu, the god of gods, vanished there only. Since then Devadyuti became extremely devoted to Viṣṇu.

Dilīpa said:

218-221. O great sage, I am favoured by you. I am purified by this account like Gaṅgā in company with Viṣṇu. Tell me that hymn of (i.e. composed by) the sinless brāhmaṇa, with which Viṣṇu was pleased. I have a great curiosity (to know it). O brāhmaṇa, I think, by your favour I have obtained my desired object. To whose greatness does the company of the great not lead? Favour me and tell me the excellent hymn of Viṣṇu, due to which the lord was pleased and obliged him by his appearance.

Vasiṣṭha said:

222-261. I shall tell you the secret, excellent hymn that is muttered. It was formerly received by Garuḍa and from him it came to me. It contains the essence of metaphysics; it causes great prosperity; is auspicious. It removes all sins, and is the great cause of the knowledge about the self, O king. (The hymn is as follows:) "Oṁ, obeisance to Vāsudeva; salutation to Viśva, to Cakrin (i.e. the Disc-holder), to Kṛṣṇa to whom his devotees are dear, to Jagannātha and to Śārṅgin. One who praises, the one that is praised, the praise—when all this is Viṣṇu himself, by whom is he praised? The devotion of men pleases (him). Which praise would delight that god whose breath are the Vedas with the Vedāṅgas and the Sūtras? Due to my devotion I have become talkative. All the three worlds with the mobile and the immobile, revolve like a wheel. Therefore, O god having a disc in your hand and best weapons, are sung (your praises). (When) actually the Veda cannot describe him, or speech or mind does not know him, then how can one like me praise him, or would be his devotee? You are the first Brahman; you are Brahmā-Viṣṇu. You are the refuge of all. You are the Creator, the cause of Brahman. You yourself are pure Brahman. (O lord, which is this body of you that touches the one having a body after breaking it. Salutation to you who are not touched by blemishes of the body.) O Viṣṇu, there is no doubt that you are that thought—the mass of happiness—which keeps awake as god, and does not sleep in one's soul. The Great Principles like Mahat, so also the guṇas that give rise to modifications (of Prakṛti)—all that is you, O lord; diversity is a foolish idea.

Through the three concepts like Keśa, Keśava, you are conceived, O brahman, as a man by sons etc. The entire world having some form without faults and with particular qualities appears to the poets. That truth, that pure Viṣṇu, I praise. I salute that Brahman, knowing which, the friends of the world having no desire, perform acts prescribed by the scriptures. I praise that Viṣṇu who is just existence, free from destruction, whom the meditating saints resort to after awakening, and who exists in all beings. I praise that Viṣṇu, seeing whom equal to you the best brāhmaṇas sing (i.e. praise) 'I am Brahma', after knowing him. Salutation to him, of the nature of pure intelligence, who destroys the variety of delusions through his divine power, so also the ego and sense of mineness of men and heaps of sins. Salutation to him, of the nature of pure intelligence, by remembering whose name the heaps of men's sins instantly perish at the time of setting or not setting out, always getting into the shadow of whose lotus-like feet a man is not burnt in the worlds burning with the blazing flames of the fire of delusion. I salute that Ananta, by remembering whom there is no delusion, no misery, no diseases and griefs. The beings that sprang up from the intellect do not at all desire (any thing). People moving in one (way), knowing him see him as their soul. If the meaning of a word or of a sign has Viṣṇu as its objects, then due to that fact may not the worldly existence touch (me). If Viṣṇu, pervading the world, is highly honoured by the Vedas etc., then due to that fact may I have uninterrupted devotion to Viṣṇu. May that Viṣṇu who is not a seedless seed, who is caused by a seed, cut off with the sword of bright knowledge the seed of the worldly existence. May that Viṣṇu who becomes one having three bodies like an actor, due to the (three) constituents in acts like creation, maintenance and destruction, favour me. May that Viṣṇu who, merely for protecting righteousness, descended on the earth in ten ways, and who was requested by all gods, favour me. May that god Viṣṇu who, the pure one, lives all alone in the abode of the heart (of objects) beginning from Brahmā up to a clump of grass, favour me. In front of the gods, that god who was one and many entered the deities. May that Viṣṇu, the Creator, favour me. He is a bird in the sky in the form of the heart. He is like the sky. He is the origin of the

sky. He is beyond the sky. His acts are (infinite) like the sky. He goes to the sky. The sky is Brahmā. He enjoys the sky etc. In the end he is of the form of the sky. You enjoy the sacrifice. Due to your lustre, your joy, your illusion (Māyā) the world becomes united. You are of the form of lethargy, misery and truth also. The universe created by you delights. Forsaken by you, it would be impure. Though in contact with it, you are detached; and due to that you become changed. You are the consciousness born of combination of physical elements, whom the Cārvākas worship. The Saugatas (i.e. the Buddhists) call you a transitory idea with their logic. Those who look upon the Jina as their deity (i.e. the Jainas) look upon you as having the size of the body. The Sāṁkhyas meditate upon you, beyond the Prakṛti, as the Puruṣa. The Upaniṣads think between themselves that you alone are Brahman, free from birth etc., the ancient one, and having bliss as its characteristic. You are the (five) elements like the sky, the body, the mind, the intellect, the senses, knowledge and ignorance. There is nothing else but you. You are the Creator of all beings; you alone are my refuge. You are the fire, the oblation; you are Indra; you are the hotṛ priest; you are the hymn: you are the act and the fruit. O Viṣṇu, you are existence and non-existence; I have sought your refuge. You are the giver of the fruit of (one's) act. You are the fruit of the rite of the initiated. You are the cause of all the beings. You are my refuge. May my love take delight in you as that of the young women in the young men, and as of the young men in a young woman. The servants of Yama do not see even a sinner who has bowed to you, as the owl does not see the sun. The three torments trouble a man through masses of sins as long as he does not, with devotion, remember your lotus-like feet.

262-269. I offer obeisance to that revered Viṣṇu whom the qualities, birth, bodily characters, so also the movements of the sense do not touch; (but) whom, the sages free from the delusion of attachment, touch. Wailing like—he is gross as a means, a (gross) means in a cause, is their cause, is without means and cause, the sages enter him. Salutation to that Viṣṇu waited upon by sages. Salutation to that Viṣṇu who is waited upon by sages and who having embraced Lakṣmī in the form of happiness and salvation, that is having the charming quality like affluence, and

that is subjugated by his meditation, shampooing and shaking, sleeps here in self-pleasure. I bow to Viṣṇu in my heart, in whom of a detached nature due to the modification like being born etc., the group of the six waves (of passions) shakes, and whom the faults like Cupid (i.e. love) etc. do not torment. I salute that Viṣṇu whose pure company of his meditation removes ignorance, the world in having fallen into the fire of whose knowledge perishes, the bright sword of whose knowledge cuts off the enemy of doubt, and who is the mass of pure knowledge. Since all the mobile and immobile beings are under the control of Viṣṇu, may he due to this fact remain before me. Since Viṣṇu is the entire immobile and mobile world, may he, due to this fact, manifest his form to me. If I have the same best devotion for my preceptor as for Viṣṇu, may he, due to this fact, manifest himself (to me).

270-293. Thus thinking about (my) devotion for him, due to true oaths, Viṣṇu who was pleased, showed himself to me." Then having given him a boon, and having fulfilled his desire, Lakṣmī's lord (i.e. Viṣṇu), pleased by the brāhmaṇa with the hymn, left. The brāhmaṇa also being satisfied and highly devoted to Viṣṇu, and muttering the hymn remained in the penance grove with his disciples. A man who narrates this hymn or he who listens to it, obtains the abundant fruit of a horse-sacrifice. A brāhmaṇa always gets awakening due to his knowledge. He has no mind for (committing) a sin; he does not see anything inauspicious. By narrating this hymn all men have peace of intellect, tranquility of mind, and peace of senses also. A man who, after having pondered over the meaning, devoutly mutters this hymn, shakes off his sins in this world and gets Viṣṇu's position. He who always recites it, gets his desired objects, so also sons, grandsons, beasts, long life, strength, power. He who narrates this hymn gets that fruit which is obtained by giving a thousand pots full of sesamum, or a thousand cows. A man soon obtains, by means of this hymn, whatever he desires from among righteousness, worldly prosperity, sensual enjoyment and salvation. Men who hear this hymn have always a mind for (good) conduct, modesty, piety, knowledge, penance and morality. By reciting it (just) once a man having (committed) major or minor sins, has his mind purified instantly. It increa-

ses intellect, wealth, glory, fame, knowledge, righteousness. It pacifies evil Planets; it destroys all that is inauspicious. Brāhmaṇas should recite this hymn removing all diseases, wholesome, destroying all dangers, helping to cross misery. It should at once be recited at the time of trouble from Planets and Stars, and fear from the king and thieves, calamities from fire and thieves. (Due to the recital of this) there is no fear from lions, tigers, so also from magic, spirits, imps and so also from demons. When this hymn is recited men have no fear at all from demonesses, big miseries, and dangers. He who worshipping Viṣṇu would recite this hymn, is not contaminated by sins like a lotus-leaf by water. A man gets the same position by reciting this auspicious hymn as is obtained by baths at holy places like Gaṅgā etc. He, who recites it once, twice or thrice a day, always and in all seasons obtains inexhaustible happiness. A man reciting this hymn (just) once obtains the same fruit as is obtained by reciting thrice even the four Vedas. He who remembers Viṣṇu with devotion, obtains inexhaustible wealth, becomes dear to women and is honoured in the world. He who daily recites this hymn, is always endowed with wealth, never meets with a calamity, and is not deprived of cows. Poverty, misfortune, bad dreams, bad thoughts of the devotees who listen to this hymn, at once perish.

294-297. He who, getting up in the morning, and being pure and greatly devoted to Viṣṇu, recites this, obtains inexhaustible happiness in this and the next world. This hymn called *Yogasāra* is accompanied by divine lustre, gives delight to Viṣṇu, is auspicious, produces Viṣṇu's favour, and gives his direct vision. It is highly purifying. He who always recites it goes to the heaven of Viṣṇu. Thus I have told you the secret hymn, destroying sins. Hereafter I shall tell you about the release of the imps.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWENTYNINE

The Deliverance of the Five Gandharva Maidens and Vedanidhi's Son from Imphood

Vasiṣṭha said:

1-9. Hear as to how many imps were liberated by him in the forest. Formerly in the Drāviḍa country there was a king named Citra. (He was born) in the Soma family, was a great hero, brave and had mastered the science of weapons and missiles. He, the brave one, was always possessed of streams of elephants, horses and chariots. His treasury was full of gold and many kinds of gems. He was very rich. He, with fondness, always sported in the midst of a thousand women. Being excessively fond of women, passionate, always greedy, quick-tempered, the king did not do (i.e. obey) the pious words uttered by his ministers. He very much censured Viṣṇu, and always hated Viṣṇu's devotees: (He said:) "Who is that Viṣṇu? Where is he seen? Where does he stay? Who tells about him?" In this way, the king, deluded by destiny did not put up with Viṣṇu. He, being angry, troubled those who worshipped Viṣṇu. Remaining in the condition of the heretics he did not honour brāhmaṇas, the Vedas, Vedic rites or a vow, and did not think of giving a gift. He harassed his subjects by inflicting severe punishment immorally. He was cruel, pitiless, wicked, and averse to auspicious acts. He was fallen from (good) conduct; he hated Viṣṇu; he had fallen from (maintaining sacred) fire and from (religious) acts. The king, as it were, of the form of another Yama, ruled over his subjects.

10-14. Then after a long time the king died. But he did not receive obsequies as enjoined in the Vedic texts. The king, then, being very much troubled by the hosts of (Yama's) servants, went to Yama's world along the path full of iron nails, covered with heated sand, heated by the rays of the hot sun, having no shadow of a tree, spread over with burning charcoals, and full of flames of fire, (and was) being struck by very ferocious serpents with iron-faces and being eaten (i.e. gnawed) by wolves with fierce fangs and fierce dogs while hearing the wailing of other men who had committed sins.

15-32. O king, hear about his unbearable condition in that world. The king went in succession from one hell to another. First he went to the (hell called) Tāmisra, fearful and giving great agony. Then (he went to) Andhatāmisra, where there was constant misery. Then he went to the very fierce Mahāraurava, then to Kālasūtra, Mahānaraka. Then the king, insensible due to grief, sank into Sañjīvana, Mahāvīci, Tapana, Sampratāpana, difficult to cross. (Then) the king, with his mind burnt by pain, went to Sampāta, Kākola, Kuḍmala, Pūtimṛttika, Lohaśa, Mṛgīyantra, and Panthāna, and to the river Śālmali. Then he entered a hell, very fierce, difficult to see, and inaccessible. (Then to) Asipatravana, Lohacāraka. In this way the sinful king, having fallen into all these (hells), met with terrible torment full of pangs. Then the king, due to his proclamation of great hatred of Viṣṇu, having experienced the torment inflicted by Yama for twentyone yugas, crossed the hells, and after (proper) time, he became a great evil spirit. Being hungry, he wanders in all directions in this forest. Even on the Meru mountain he does not come across food or water. The evil spirit oppressed by grief, while wandering, entered Plakṣaprasravaṇa forest (as a result) of the future good fruit. Extremely grieved he resorted to the shade of a bibhītaka tree. He loudly and fiercely cried again and again: "Oh! I am lost. How will this unhappy existence of me who am being carried by hunger and thirst, who have sought to hurt all beings, come to an end? Who will today first give a hand to me who am plunged into this ocean of sins, having a series of billows of miseries?" Devadyuti who was studying, heard this piteous wailing of the goblin of a helpless mind. Having then come there, he saw the imp, of a fierce face, fearful, of tawny eyes and weak, with his hair raised up, of a dark body, and as it were another messenger of Yama, with his tongue lolling, with long (i.e. protruded) lips, with long shanks, and full of veins, having long toes, with his mouth parched up, with his eyes like cavities, and with his skeleton (i.e. body) dry. Then the best sage, full of curiosity, asked him:

Devadyuti said:

33-35. Who are you of a fierce form? Why do you weep fiercely? Due to what are you reduced to this condition? Tell me

what can I do for you? Beings who have entered my hermitage never experience grief. All just rejoice as in the abode of Viṣṇu. O good man, quickly tell me the cause of this misery. The wise do not delay when the (desired) object has come (near).

Vasiṣṭha said:

36. Hearing these words, the evil spirit giving up (i.e. ceasing) weaping, bowing with politeness, spoke in a melancholy voice:

The evil spirit said:

37-46. Your words have removed the torment covering my entire body, as the showering cloud removes (the heat) due to a wild fire on a mountain. O brāhmaṇa, you are seen by me due to the religious merit that I have. Those who have not collected merit, do not meet the good.

Speaking like this, he told him his former account. "I have been reduced to this condition due to great hatred for Viṣṇu. O brāhmaṇa, I entertained the most sinful hatred for that Viṣṇu, remembering whose name a dead person would go to his position. I hated him who protects the beings, who maintains piety in the three worlds, and who is the innermost soul of beings. He who gives here the fruits of acts, who is sung (i.e. praised) in all Vedas, who is worshipped with penance, was hated by me. O brāhmaṇa, that Viṣṇu who is fit to be meditated upon in the Upaniṣads by ascetics who have given up (ordinary) acts, to whom forests are dear, and who move all alone without company, was hated by me. That Viṣṇu, whom all gods like Brahmā, (all) meditating saints like Sanaka worship for salvation, was hated by me. The ancient supporter of the universe in the beginning, middle and end, who has no beginning, middle or end, was hated by me. All those good acts done by me in my former existence, were burnt by my hatred for Viṣṇu, and were reduced to ash.

47-51. If somehow I see the limit (i.e. the end) of this sin, I shall not worship any other deity except Viṣṇu Having, due to my hatred of Viṣṇu, experienced for a long time the torment (inflicted) by Yama, I have come out of the hell, and have come to (i.e. am born in) the stock of an evil spirit. Now due to which active charms am I brought to your hermitage where due to

the sun of your sight the darkness in the form of (my) misery has perished? A man is taken by his own compulsive act to that place where he obtains death, bondage, happiness, wealth or a bride. Now tell me the proper act destroying my imphood. The blessed ones do not move slowly in the act of obliging others."

Devadyuti said:

52-60. Oh, this Māyā steals the memory of gods, demons and men. Due to it a hatred, destroying piety, is produced even among gods. Which fool hates, and in what way, the great lord, the creator, protector and destroyer of the worlds, and the soul of all beings? Which man, averse to devotion for him, due to offering whom all acts are fruitful, would not meet with misery? All the four castes, always worshipping Nārāyaṇa, should practise the acts laid down by holy texts, codes of laws and practices of the good. Otherwise, without resorting to the holy texts men go to hell. Therefore, a man should abandon a deed laid down in religious texts which is opposed to the import of the Vedas. Those, deceiving childish people in this world by means of self-composed religious texts, mar the path to bliss, thus harming the world. They censure Viṣṇu, the Vedas, austerities, good brāhmaṇas; therefore, due to their following wrong religious texts, they go to hell, as this very king of the Draviḍa country, hating god Viṣṇu, the lord of gods, and the master of the world, went to hell. Therefore, one desiring religious merit, should give up hatred for especially deities and brāhmaṇas, and should abandon an act outside (i.e. not enjoined by) the Vedas.

61-71. Speaking like this, the sage told the goblin (what was) good (for him): "O good one, go to Prayāga. Think of the month of Māgha. There you will undoubtedly be free from (this) imphood. This is (what) the ancient holy text (says): 'Those bathing there go to heaven.' A man casts off there (the fruit of) his former bad acts. There is nowhere any greater expiation in the form of penance, in the form of gifts, in the form of rites than a bath at Prayāga. Know that there is no sacrifice or abstract meditation superior (to that). It is a gate to heaven and salvation that is (kept) open on the earth. There is no other axe barring Prayāga having white and

black water (of Gaṅgā and Yamunā) on the earth, which cuts off (the fetters of him) who is bound by the fetters of sin. What a great disparity there is between the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, Viṣṇu, Sun's lustre and fire, and the poor, despicable, oblation of the grass (i.e. hay) in the form of a heap of sins of men! A man who has bathed at the confluence shines, after his sin is destroyed, like the moon in the autumn, after the mass of impurity is destroyed. I am not able to tell you the importance of Prayāga, by touching a drop of which a brāhmaṇa from Kerala got released." Hearing these words of the sage, the evil spirit was delighted at heart. Free from grief, he affectionately asked the sage: "O great sage, how was the inhabitant of the Kerala country released? Being kind to me, tell the account to me."

Devadyuti said:

72-77. O evil spirit, listen to the meritorious, auspicious tale from me who am telling it. In Kerala lived a brāhmaṇa named Vasu, a master of the Vedas. He was robbed of his wealth by his relatives; he was poor; he was abandoned by his kinsmen. Grieved due to great agony, he left his motherland. He, suffering slightly from a disease, moved from one country to another, and after a long time entered a great forest. While going to another holy place, he, being tired, and emaciated due to hunger, died due to scarcity of provisions on the Vindhya mountain and did not have (proper) funeral and obsequies. Due to that ripening of his acts he became a spirit in the cave of that mountain only and lived in the solitary forest for a long time. He was troubled by cold and heat, was without food and water, was naked, was bare-footed, and sighed and uttered (the words) 'Oh, Oh!'

78-96a. Wandering here and there that Keralite brāhmaṇa, turned into a spirit, obtained happpiness nowhere. Afflicted by grief he wailed and did not find a happy state. He experienced the fruit of his act of having never given a gift. All those who do not make offerings into fire, who do not worship Viṣṇu, who do not resort to knowledge of the self, who turn away from holy places, who do not give gold, garments, tāmbūla, gems, food, fruits, water to the distressed, are without any aim

(in life). All those who snatch away the wealth of a brāhmaṇa or another person, or of women, through force or fraud—all such rogues who deceive others, hypocrites, cheats, thieves, who subsist on fire, who are cruel to children, old persons, patients, women, and are without truthfulness, who set fire (to others' property), who administer poison, who stand as false witnesses, who practise illicit intercourse, who act as priest at vulgar sacrifices, who abandon their fathers, mothers, daughters-in-law, children, wives, who are miserly, greedy, atheists, and censurers of religious practices, who forsake their master, and abandon those who have surrendered to them in a battle, who snatch away cows and land, and who defile others' gems, who censure others, who are sinful, who reproach deities and preceptors (or elders), who are always engaged in accepting gifts at great holy places, who are engaged in deceiving others, so also those who harm beings, who accept bad gifts, are born again and again in the vile stocks of spirits, demons, imps, birds and beasts and trees. They do not get the slightest happiness in this world or in the next. Therefore, one should give up a prohibited act and perform one that is laid down (in sacred texts). One should resort to sacrifices, (giving) gifts, penance, holy places, hymns, deities, preceptors. Even all the four castes, having realised the effect of their acts in crores of stocks, difficult to cross, should constantly practise piety. The brāhmaṇa, having thus seen his condition as an evil spirit due to his sins, advised him about piety and again spoke to him. That evil spirit of the Keralite, thus living on the mountain, passed a long time, and saw a traveller on the path. He was carrying two bamboo-boxes (containing pitchers) with water, and was singing (the glory of) the chief god Viṣṇu of good fame. Seeing him the evil spirit suddenly obstructed his way. He presented himself (to him), and said: "Do not get frightened. O best pilgrim, I desire to drink water from you. If you do not give me water to drink, my life will certainly depart." Hearing these words of the evil spirit the traveller spoke through curiosity to him:

The pilgrim said:

96b-99. Who are you overcome with grief, emaciated, melancholy, naked, (remaining) with just your life left, about to

die, deformed, increasing (others') fear, having the form of a fresh smoke, fierce, of fickle eyes. You have not touched the ground with your feet. You are not having (much) flesh (in your) belly and arms.

Hearing these words of him, the evil spirit said (these) words:

The evil spirit said:

100-118. O most pious one, listen, I (shall) tell you the reason why I have become like this. I am a brāhmaṇa who never gave gifts, who am greedy, and whose acts are dirty. I always ate others' food. I ate all alone, and ate sweets. I did not give alms. I did not make any offering to guests. I did not perform the Vaiśvadeva (i.e. an offering to all gods); I never threw (i.e. kept) an oblation outside. I never quenched with water the thirst of beings that were oppressed with thirst. I, wandering over the earth, never gratified my dead ancestors. I never offered a śrāddha and did not at all worship deities. I never gave (anyone, an umbrella) a protection against rain or heat; nor any (sandals) to protect the feet. I never gave a water-vessel, or a tāmbūla, or a medicine (to anyone). I never offered a residence in my house (to anyone), nor did I show hospitality to anyone. I did not satisfy the blind, the old, the poor, the forlorn, the helpless with drink or food. I never gave a mouthful (of grass) to cows; I never gave relief to a patient. I never offered, or gave into fire (the oblation of) pure sesamum-seeds, O brāhmaṇa. On the earth, there are not givers of sesamum-seeds like me(?). At the time of a portentous calamity I did not give any gold having great fruit. I did not give (any gift) on a Saṁkrānti day and on the days of the solar or lunar eclipse. O brāhmaṇa, I passed the parvan days also void (of any gift). All the important days in Kārtika were always fruitless for me. On the Aṣṭakā[1] days or Maghā[2] days I did not offer anything to the dead ancestors. I did not bathe (at a holy place) in Māgha which gives (good) form, fortune and desired objects. When Jupiter enters Leo, I did not give anything to a brāhmaṇa learned in the Vedas on

1. Aṣṭakā—A group of three days (7th, 8th and 9th) beginning from the seventh day after the full moon.

2. Maghā—Name of the tenth lunar mansion containing five stars.

the bank of Gautamī, in my former existence. Similarly I did not bathe in Kṛṣṇaveṇī, when the Jupiter entered Virgo. I never controlled the cold of brāhmaṇas afflicted by cold, who had bathed after kindling fire with heaps of wood in Pauṣa and Māgha. I did not give cold water (to people) in months like Vaiśākha. I did not plant an aśvattha tree, nor did I rear a fig-tree. I never released beings from a prison. I never protected one who was afflicted through fear of (other) beings and who had sought my shelter. I have not gratified Viṣṇu by fasting for three nights. O brāhmaṇa, vows like Kṛcchra, Atikṛcchra, Pārāka, and so also Cāndrāyaṇa, another vow like Taptakṛcchra, so also Sāntapana vows—all these auspicious vows were observed by gods like Indra. I did not observe them and parch up my body formerly. O best brāhmaṇa, my former existence was fruitless in this way.

119-133. O brāhmaṇa, mark the very cruel and wonderful fruits, very difficult to understand, of my former acts, (which I am having) in this existence. On this mountain there are (pieces of) flesh (of animals) killed by wolves and tigers, so also of fruits abandoned everywhere by parrots. There are good, fragrant and juicy fruits, so also soft, and roots very fit to be eaten. There are honeys of very many kinds. Everywhere there is water of streams and springs. Even though all these things are easily available on the mountain, I do not find any food (as it is) destroyed by destiny. I subsist on air, as do the serpents. O brāhmaṇa, I am alive due to the prowess of the divine stock. (Even) with power, intellect, hymns, valour, brave acts, companions and friends, a man cannot obtain the unobtainable. In this world destiny alone is the cause of acquisition or non-acquisition, pleasure or pain, marriage, death, life, enjoyment, disease or separation. The ugly, those coming from bad families, fools, those of abhorred conduct, the censured ones, those that are without bravery or valour, enjoy kingdom due to (good) fortune. The squint-eyed ones, the lame, the unworthy, the immoral, the vicious, eunuchs, are seen to be enthroned due to (good) fortune. In front of those who have given sesamum-seeds, cows, gold and garments, af air girl (in marriage), who have given (a piece of) land, a bed, seats, tāmbūla, houses, wealth, eatables, food, sandal and agaru (sandal), stand enjoy-

ments in a forest, at the top of a mountain, in a village, or even in a city, with great care. On this mountain also stay more powerful demons, so also very fierce demons, goblins and female goblins. At some time, somehow, somewhere, they, wandering in the forest, get food and drink in every forest.

134-142. Having heard this you should not be afraid of them. They are not capable of even looking at you, a pure devotee of Viṣṇu. Demons, evil spirits and demonesses neither touch nor see him whose body is protected by devotion for Viṣṇu and who depends upon Viṣṇu. Ghosts, goblins, gandharvas, female attendants of Durgā, respectable Planets, Revatīs, Vṛddharevatīs, Mukhamaṇḍīs, so also (other) Planets, Yakṣas, young Planets, cruel, wicked, old Planets, so also Mātṛgrahas, fierce Planets, other Vināyakas also, Kṛtyās, serpents, Kūṣmāṇḍa, so also other wicked beings, do not look at a pure great brāhmaṇa, Viṣṇu's devotee, O brāhmaṇa. Imps protect a pure and the most religious person, and do not trouble him. The Planets, Stars and deities always protect a pure person. On the tip of your tongue is Viṣṇu's name. In your heart remains the Veda. You are pure and devoted to giving gifts. You have fear from nowhere. O brāhmaṇa, thus I remain undergoing the fruits of my acts. Thinking and deliberating like this again and again, I do not wail. Similarly I am not pained as long as I remember the words of the crane, which I, when I was wandering, heard on the bank of the Jambālinī.

The brāhmaṇa said:

143. What kind of (i.e. which) words uttered by the crane did you hear? I desire to hear them. O evil spirit, tell them quickly.

The evil spirit said:

144-153. I shall tell you the words of the crane. O best pilgrim, listen to them. In the interior of this forest there is a river Dhūsarā by name, rising from a mountain. She is always violent due to fish, and full of intoxicated elephants, rich with the beauty of great arjuna trees, and charming with glossy jambū fruits. Roaming in the dense forest, I reached her bank. When I remained there with a desire to eat fruits, a crane,

along with a female crane, flew from another forest and came there to resort to the sand-bank with many birds. Having drunk water and sported just there with his mate, and putting the top of his head (i.e. his beak) into the cavity in his left wing, he slept. In the meanwhile was seen a monkey, getting down from the tree. His face was red. His eyes were very red. He was proud, and had strong rows of nails. He had (profuse) hair on his body, had a long tail, was quick in his movements. He speedily came there where the crane had slept. Coming (to the crane), he, with both his hands cruelly seized tightly the leg of the crane even as many birds were watching. All the birds, flew and flew and went elsewhere. The female crane remained (there) frightened and crying. The crane, with his sleep disturbed, with his eyes trembling due to fear, raised his neck quickly and saw (the monkey).

154-160. Seeing the wicked and very fierce monkey, desiring to kill him, the bird spoke to him in a sweet voice: "O monkey, why do you trouble me without any fault (of mine)? In the world, even the kings punish guilty persons. Good persons (i.e. beings) like you do not trouble harmless good birds averse to other (means of) subsistence, eating the moss in water, living in a forest, always bent upon sporting with their own mates, and avoiding others' mates. O best monkey, (beings) like you do not trouble birds free from censuring others and from wickedness, and the best servants. O monkey, quickly leave me who am fully innocent. I remember your (former) existence. But you do not know mine." Having heard these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, the quick monkey left him and remaining away quickly said to him:

The monkey said:

161. Tell me how you know my former existence. You are a bird having no knowledge, and I am an animal moving in the forest.

The crane said:

162-172. I know your (former) existence (due to my) clearly remembering your condition in your former life. In the former life you were Parvateśvara, the king of the Vindhya region. I

was the most respected priest in your family. Therefore, O best monkey, I know (the former life of) you. While protecting this land, you, without discrimination, and collecting much wealth, harassed all (your) subjects. O monkey, you were first burnt by the flames of fire due to the torment inflicted on the subjects, and then were thrown into the very fierce Kumbhīpāka. Being repeatedly burnt and being born, you, uttering fierce words, and weeping again and again, and experiencing, with your hellish body, a terrible agony due to the fire in the Kumbhīpāka passed thirty years. After you again crossed (i.e. went out of) the hell, you have obtained this existence of the monkey due to the remaining sin, due to which you now desire to kill me. Formerly through your valour you took away bananas from the grove of a brāhmaṇa without being permitted by him. Note that the ripening of that act is giving its fruit. Therefore, due to it you are still a monkey, and are now living in the forest. The undergoing (of the fruit) of a good or bad act done previously plays among (i.e. is effective on) beings. Even gods cannot pass over it. Thus I know your (former) life properly and with its cause. Not being deluded by my knowledge, I too obtained this crane's body.

The evil spirit said:

173. O brāhmaṇa, hearing this account the monkey too said to the crane: "You know (everything) properly, (then) how were you born as a bird?"

The crane said:

174-187. I shall tell you about that act due to which I met with misery and due to which I went to (i.e. was born in) the stock of a bird. Please listen to all that. To give it to many brāhmaṇas on Carmadā at the time of a solar eclipse you had laid aside (stock of) grains measuring a hundred khāris. Through my arrogance of (being your) priest and through greed, I, deceiving the brāhmaṇas, gave them a little and all (the remaining) I look (for myself). Due to the sin springing from taking the wealth (to be given) in common to the brāhmaṇas, I fell into the Kālasūtra hell, full of mire of blood, which was quite full of moving insects, having a bad odour, foamy with pus; with my

face down and licking the pus, I was plunged into it up to my navel. Similarly from above my body was being constantly eaten up by great vultures and crows, and was being cut off by insects. In that mire of blood I became breathless; and even a short time there was as much as a kalpa for me. For three myriad years I experienced the agony. O monkey, I am not able to describe that misery (I had) in the hell. Priesthood is very fearful and naturally causes sin. In it the living of a brāhmaṇa is like that of a god. Acceptance of gifts from a king is fearful. Due to it brāhmaṇas were burnt. The priest would snatch away even their wealth. Due to that he becomes a hellish (being). The wise declare that the sin which a king first physically commits, is fixed on the priest. Luckily somehow I crossed the ocean of hell. Due to luck I first reached the stock of a bird. I got this condition (i.e. existence) of a crane, as, formerly, after taking a brass-metal pot from my sister, I gave it to a gambler. And this was a very fearful brāhmaṇī, who stole brass-metal. Due to that she has become my lawful wife, the female crane.

188-201. O monkey, I have thus told you the entire fruit of (my acts). Now listen to the past, the present and the future. I shall be (born as) a swan; and you will also be (born as) a swan. This my wife, the female crane, will be (born as) a female swan. We shall live happily in the Kāmarūpa country. After that we shall go to a female devotee, (who will be) good (to us) in future. Then we shall obtain existence as humans, difficult to get, where virtue and its opposite are secured by beings. Śiva, having thus deluded all beings with his Māyā, rejoices by giving pleasures and pains not only to us but to all beings. This is the way created variously in the world, which is full of virtue and vice and the nature of its fruit is pleasure and pain. It is always or repeatedly followed by all beings, gods, demons, human beings, tigers, worms, insects and aquatic animals. Without thinking about detached meditating saints who have mastered the Upaniṣads, no one has crossed this path having thorns of misery. Maheśvara, considering the place and time gives in this world the fruit of virtuous or vicious deed of the size of an atom or a big one. Very intelligent persons, knowing the Māyā of the lord, knowing what is to be done according to the sacred

laws, do not grieve, nor are they tormented, nor are they troubled. O monkey, the effect of the former deeds cannot be changed with means or intelligence even by gods. Formerly you were born as a king, then were born as a hellish being. Now being born as a monkey, you will get an existence like that (i.e. according to your former deeds). Thinking like this, O monkey, being free from grief, and enjoying in this forest, wait for your death. I, too, bound by the Māyā of the Lord, and mustering courage, will pass my existence as a crane in forest after forest.

The monkey said:

202-203. I honoured you before. Even now I praise you. You remember (our) former existence. (Now) I know everything about our former life. O crane, live with the female crane. May you always have well-being. I whose illusion has gone due to your words, will (now) always move.

The evil spirit said:

204-216. O brāhmaṇa, when, on the bank of the river I heard this charming, wonderful, highly purifying dialogue between the bird (i.e. the crane) and the monkey, I too was enlightened, and due to that my grief disappeared. Seeing the very wonderful greatness of the water of Gaṅgā, I, O best brāhmaṇa, now ask you for the water of Gaṅgā. I desire to be emancipated from this state of the evil spirit. I am oppressed with severe thirst. O brāhmaṇa, on this mountain only I saw a great wonder of the water of Gaṅgā. (Therefore,) I desire to drink that water. A brāhmaṇa, born on Pāriyātra, acted as priest at the village-sacrifices. Due to acting as a priest at the sacrifices of those who were incompetent to offer sacrifices, he was born as a brahmarākṣasa on Vindhya. Due to his desire for my company, he stayed there for eight years. O best brāhmaṇa, his good son collected his bones (after burning his corpse). Bringing them to the pure holy place of Kanakhala, he cast them into Gaṅgā. That moment only he became free from the very fierce demonhood. Thus, I actually saw the wonderful greatness of a bath in Gaṅgā. Therefore, I asked (you) for this water of Gaṅgā. Since, formerly I procured many possessions at the holy place, and did not counteract (the

effect of) them in the form of muttering (of hymns) etc., therefore, I, of the form of an evil spirit am not getting water and food easily. On this Vindhya mountain a thousand years have thus passed. Giving up great shame (i.e. being very shameless), I have told you everything. O most religious one, now quickly gratify my life being in the throat (i.e. about to depart), by giving me water. In this world life even in the condition of an evil spirit is difficult to be obtained by beings. By all means men should always protect their body. Even those suffering from leprosy etc. do not desire to abandon their bodies.

Devadyuti said:

217-227. Hearing these words of (i.e. uttered by) him, the pilgrim was much amazed, and feeling compassion for the evil spirit, thought: 'In the world the fruit of sin or religious merit is actually seen as birth as a god, a demon, a man, a lower animal, an insect or a worm—thus birth in many stocks and being troubled by many diseases. So also death of children or old persons, blindness and hunch-backedness. So also affluence, poverty, wisdom, folly. These affects take place. How can they be otherwise? Those who in their place of work give to worthy recipients money earned through just ways, and (thus) accomplish their own well-being, are blessed. Land, gems, gold, cows, grains, a house, elephants, chariots, horses, garments, villages, ready food, fruits, water, so also one's daughter, a divine medicine, food, umbrella, sandals, an excellent seat, a bed, a tāmbūla, flowers, a fan, excellent seat—all this should be given by those desiring to win the three worlds. What is given is received in heaven; what is given is alone enjoyed. Umbrellas, chowries, vehicles, excellent horses, excellent elephants, mansions, excellent beds, cows, buffaloes, and excellent women, food, ornaments, pearls, sons, maid-servants, a noble family, (long) life, (good) health, affluence, skill in arts and lores—all this is obtained by men on the earth as the fruit of giving (gifts) only. Therefore give carefully. That which is not given does not stand by one.'

228-239. This verse was sung by the most religious traveller. Hearing thus, the evil spirit, with his mind afflicted, spoke again: "O traveller, I think you are almost like one coversant

with Dharma. There is no doubt about it. Give me jīvana (life/water) as the cloud (gives) water to a cātaka. Do not much delay in giving me the gift of my life." Then the traveller replied in words pregnant with justice. "O evil spirit, listen. My parents stay at Bhṛgukṣetra. For them I have brought the water from (Prayāga) the lord of holy places. (But now) in the middle (i.e. on my way) you have asked for that white and black water (i.e. from Prayāga). I do not know whether any doubt on my part for a religious act is proper now. For the strength or weakness (of this act) I shall do (i.e. follow) the great order from the Vedas and the religious texts. (I will) not (do anything) through pride only. The sages and deities have looked upon the protection of the life of beings as superior to all the sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice. Thus giving you that excellent water and protecting you, the evil spirit, I shall again bring the purifying water and take it (to my parents). This appears to me to be a powerful act giving me religious merit. The wise have said that all else except obliging others is inferior. Men, obliging others, have gladly offered even their (own) life. By giving water there would be an obligation. Then what is not gained by me? This verse, formerly sung by Dadhīci is heard (i.e. well-known) on the earth: 'Benevolence even with (i.e. at the cost of one's) life or wealth, which is full of all piety and is its essence, is approved by all those who are conversant with Dharma. The religious merit due to obliging others is equivalent to hundreds of sacrifices'."

240-249. Speaking like this, that excellent, most religious brāhmaṇa gave to the evil spirit, the water (from the confluence of) Gaṅgā and Yamunā for the protection of his life. The evil spirit drank the water and sprinkled his head with it. That moment only he abandoned his body of evil spirit, and became one with a divine body. Seeing that great wonder, the Keralite said: "Oh, due to the drops of the water from Veṇī (i.e. Triveṇī), I am freed from the condition of an evil spirit. I think even Brahmā cannot describe the merit of the water. Otherwise, why does Śiva have the water of Gaṅgā on his head? He who would drink the water of Gaṅgā as much as the size of a sesamum (i.e. even a small drop), whose power is inconceivable, would be a god or a siddha. He would not enter the womb (i.e. would not be born

again). There is no accomplishment like Gaṅgā, no knowledge like Gaṅgā, no salvation like Gaṅgā, since Gaṅgā is superior to all. Therefore, O religious one, final beatitude is in the hand of him who, with all efforts and great devotion, always resorts to Gaṅgā. O traveller, live long, do not desist from piety. By giving me a drop of the water of Gaṅgā, you have instantly emancipated me." Saying so, that evil spirit from Kerala, after having congratulated that excellent brother, the traveller, with blessings, proceeded to hevaen. That traveller also again brought the water, and bringing to his mind the wonder (caused by) the water from the holy place, went the same way (as he had come).

Vasiṣṭha said:

250-258. Thus hearing the greatness of Prayāga and saluting the sage, the evil spirit at once and quickly went to Prayāga in Māgha. O best brāhmaṇa, that evil spirit too, having bathed at Prayāga in the month of Māgha, and with his sins destroyed, gave up that body of the evil spirit. Then that Draviḍa king, being one with a divine body, devoutly praising god Viṣṇu, and free from blemishes, being praised by gandharvas, being honoured by divine ladies, went in an excellent aeroplane, to the city of Indra. O brāhmaṇa, I have thus told you, the former, wonderful historical account which instantly destroys sins. You have thus heard (the account) giving knowledge, giving salvation, and destroying misery. I have thus told you the wonderful old account; O best brāhmaṇa, you have heard the old account destroying misery. Now, with me these girls, this your son, and you—all desiring felicity, should come to Prayāga. There we shall have the Māgha bath difficult to be had even by gods. There they will instantly give up their goblinhood caused by sin.

Śiva said:

259-286. Having thus gladly drunk the sweet juice of the story from the lotus-like mouth of Vasiṣṭha, all were much delighted, and they crossed the ocean of hell. Being delighted they proceeded with him in the sky. O Dilīpa, hear all (about) that holy place Sitāsita (i.e. Prayāga). They who were irresistible, having secured their desired object, quickly came

there, and that time they were happy in their heart. Then Lomaśa kindly said in the courtyard of the sky: "Let all see this lord of holy places on the earth. All beings are freed at this Prayāga, (even) without knowledge. The Creator, desiring to create, performed a sacrifice here only. (Then) he obtained the power to create and then created (the universe). Viṣṇu, desiring a wife, bathed here at Prayāga. Therefore, he obtained Lakṣmī as his wife at the time of churning (out) the nectar here (only). Having lived here for six months, and having bathed at Veṇī at will, the Trident-holder killed with three arrows Tripura. These three ponds are blazing with perpetual fires. This fire is satisfied, and is nourished with even water. Here the thirtythree gods, being contented, were much delighted. Śiva, Nīlakaṇṭha, Kapālabhṛt (literally, holder of a skull), the chap served constantly by gods, came here (to offer) a handful (of water). This is that Viṣṇu, of the form of abstract meditation, in whose fit mouth, the son of Mṛkaṇḍa, having entered when the world was full of flames, stayed. This is that Śiva's Bhāgīrathī which removes all misery, For perfection she is served by siddhas, and gives enjoyment and salvation. She who always gives bliss, is excellent on the path to heaven. This is that river Bhāgīrathī, the goddess, that is the cause of (i.e. that leads one to) heaven. This is that river Yamunā herself, by merely bathing in whose water, beings obtain the same world as that of the Sun. O sage, the confluence of these two auspicious rivers gives happiness. Those who have bathed here, being sanctified by knowledge, are not roasted in hell. All beings, (even) without (having) knowledge, are liberated at this Prayāga. O brāhmaṇa, listen to another old historical account which destroys all sins and diseases of the listeners. Formerly a gandharva, cursed by Ṛcīka, became a crow. He at once got rid of the curse when he bathed here, that is at Prayāga only. Due to Indra's curse the celestial nymph Urvaśī dropped from heaven. She, desiring (to go to) heaven, bathed (here) and soon obtained heaven. O sage, Nahuṣa's son Yayāti obtained a propitious son after he, longing for a son, bathed at Prayāga having the holy white and black water (of Gaṅgā and Yamunā). O best brāhmaṇa, formerly Indra, longing for wealth bathed well here. Through deceit he snatched all the treasures of Kubera. Kaśyapa intent on propitiating Śiva, practised penance

here. At this holy place Bharadvāja obtained perfection in abstract meditation. O brāhmaṇa, formerly at this holy place, Sanaka and others, masters of abstract meditation and of tranquil minds, obtained the fruit—the object of their abstract meditation. Those who have bathed here at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā in (the month of) Māgha, have become of the form of Stars and have pervaded the entire world. Those desiring (some objects) obtain their desired objects, and those desiring salvation obtain salvation. Those desiring perfection obtain it at Prayāga, O best brāhmaṇa. Now these maidens and your son long for salvation. On my word let all of them bathe here at Prayāga. Due to the efficacy of the water of the Veṇī (i.e. the confluence of Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī), may they obtain the entire wealth, the great fruit of the curse received by them*." Hearing these super-sensible**, true and unsurpassable words of the sage all they, with eager minds, were ready to bathe. Having reached Prayāga, difficult to get, they, in a moment, gave up their goblinhood.

287-289a. Freed from the agony of the curse, they obtained their respective bodies. Vedanidhi, seeing his son and those girls of divine forms, and with his mind pleased, affectionately praised Lomaśa. "Due to your favour only, this great ocean of sin has been crossed. O best sage, now speak what is proper for (these) children."

Lomaśa said:

289b-298. This young boy has studied the Vedas and has completed his vow. Let him accept the lotus-like hand of these, full of love (for him).

Then by Lomaśa's words and those of his father, that pious celibate had the auspicious rite performed by the sages with auspicious articles and hymns. According to the religious rule he accepted the hand of all the five girls. All the girls were then delighted and had their desires satisfied. The boy also was pleased. That sage Lomaśa, having granted them permission, and being saluted by them, went to his hermitage, the Meru mountain, resorted to by gods. Then, O king, Vedanidhi, taking with him his five daughters-

*प्राप्तशापमहाफलां (?) **अतीन्द्रिय (?)

in-law and his son, and being delighted, went to Kubera's city. O best king, due to the religious merit arising from the bath in Māgha at the lord of holy places, Prayāga, and due to the words of the excellent sage, the five gandharva girls got free from all sins, and due to having got the desired object had their desires fulfilled. He who everyday listens to this great historical account, which is purifying, which has become an object of veneration, which is the cause of the destruction of sins, becomes complete with all desired objects, and being rare and endowed with religious merit goes to the world of gods. He who, having heard this historical account, would honour the reader with cows, gold, garments,—since the reader is like Brahmā—(obtains religious merit). Since the reader is honoured, Viṣṇu is worshipped; therefore, a man who would desire his worldly existence to be fruitful, should everyday honour him.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTY

Kinds of Devotion to Viṣṇu

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O lord, I have heard about the greatness of Kārtika, so also of Māgha. Now I desire to hear about the best act, giving salvation. O mighty lord of the universe, tell me what is called the best devotion, by merely knowing which men would obtain happiness.

Mahādeva said:

3-19. A man should have his heart merged in Him. That devotion is said to be the greatest. He should also be given to practising compassion. He should always be intent upon duties sacred to Viṣṇu. He should subsist on fruits, roots and water. He should have the marks of a conch, a disc (on his body). He should worship Viṣṇu three times a said. That is supposed to be virtuous devotion. Virtuous (*sāttvikī*) devotion is said to be the best. The passionate (*rājasī*) one is said to be intermediate.

The vicious (*tāmasī*) one is said to be the lowest. (Thus) devotion is said to be of three kinds. Those who desire the fruit of salvation should have (devotion) for Viṣṇu. That devotion which people have through egotism, hypocrisy or deceit is declared to be vicious. So also that devotion for the god which is had for the destruction of another (person), or with hypocrisy in mind, is declared to be vicious. That separate (i.e. another type of) devotion in which a man would worship me at the beginning of an act of worship with the aim of (getting) objects of senses, glory or affluence is passionate. Brāhmṇas intent on knowledge should practise virtuous devotion which is said to consist in the sense of dedicating oneself to Viṣṇu. Therefore, O goddess, Viṣṇu is always to be served. Vice is earned through vicious devotion, passion through passionate (devotion), and through virtuous (devotion) virtue is secured. A brāhmaṇa engaged in Vedic studies, wealthy, free from attachment and hatred, having (the marks of) a conch and a disc (on his person) is always said to be pure. He who is engaged in ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites, who always censures Viṣṇu and his devotees is said to be a great cāṇḍāla. O chief goddess, those who are always engaged in Vedic studies, who are always acting as priests at sacrifices, who are always engaged in maintaining the holy fire, who are averse to Vaiṣṇava religion, are out of (the fold of) the Vedas. The wise, being pleased cause tranquillity in those men, the grandsire etc. bring about happiness, and the best sages give well-being to those men who have devotion for Viṣṇu. Auspicious Planets and evil spirits and goblins, hosts of gods like Brahmā are pleased, and Lakṣmī is steady in the houses of those men who have devotion for Viṣṇu. Holy places like Gaṅgā, Gayā, Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Kāśī, Prayāga, Kuru, Jāṅgala, live devoutly in the bodies of those men who have devotion for Viṣṇu. Thus a wise man should everyday worship the lord with Lakṣmī; and should thus be blessed everyday. He is undoubtedly a brāhmaṇa. The man—a kṣatriya, a vaiśya or a śūdra—devoted especially to the best god, goes to (i.e. secures) salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYONE

Worship of the Śālagrāma Stone

Pārvatī said:

1-2. There are the pure images of the Śālagrāma stone on the earth. In how many ways is the worship of those image said to be done? Tell (me), O lord of gods, how many (images) are to be worshipped by brāhmaṇas? (How many) by kṣatriyas? How are they to be worshipped by vaiśyas, śūdras and women?

Mahādeva said:

3-18. The Śālagrama stone is auspicious, pure and leads to religious merit; even by seeing it a man, (even if he is a) killer of a brāhmaṇa, is purified. That house where this auspicious image of the Śālagrāma stone exists, is said to be the best of all by all holy texts. Brāhmaṇas should worship five, kṣatriyas four, similarly vaiśyas should worship three, or one with care. A śūdra would obtain salvation just by seeing it. O goddess, those men who worship the (Śālagrāma) according to this rite, enjoy all pleasures and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. This is the great image which always removes sins. For, O goddess, the fruit beginning with Kailāsa is produced by worshipping (it). Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvarī, Sarasvatī are there where the stone is. There is no doubt about this. O beautiful lady, what is the use of repeatedly saying much? Men, desiring salvation, should properly worship it. A man is purified by seeing them who, O chief goddess, worship Viṣṇu devoutly. O chief goddess, Brahmā and others are not aware of the religious merit of the śūdras who as their servants, worship them well. Twentyone (generations of) the family of those brāhmaṇas who devoutly worship Viṣṇu are emancipated in those existences. The brāhmaṇa having marks of a conch and a disc (on his person), who would worship (Viṣṇu), has, by means of having worshipped Viṣṇu, worshipped the entire world. The dead ancestors speak with one another: 'Viṣṇu's devotees are born in our family. Till the final deluge they have emancipated that family. They will, after emancipating us, take us to Viṣṇu's abode. That day alone is lucky. The mother is blessed. The relatives are blessed. So also

his father is blessed, and his relatives also.' All intent upon Viṣṇu's devotion should be known to be most lucky. Merely by seeing them one gets freed from a major sin. By seeing Viṣṇu's devotees, all minor sins, so also all major sins perish.

19-29. Those men who are Viṣṇu's devotees, shine on the earth like fires and are freed from all sins like the moon from clouds. All the sins, deliberate, non-deliberate, small, big, committed through speech, mind, (physical) act, perish on seeing Viṣṇu's devotees. On seeing a devotee of Viṣṇu all the sin due to having done harm (to others) knowingly or unknowingly, perishes. On just seeing the good the sinless go to heaven; the most sinful become purified. I have told you the truth. A devotee of Viṣṇu, skilled in washing the smearing of the mud of the mundane existence, is undoubtedly the purifier of the purifiers. Those devotees of Viṣṇu who everyday remember Viṣṇu, should be known to be full of Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is undoubtedly there (i.e. in them). Those brāhmaṇas who meditate upon Viṣṇu as dark like a fresh cloud, having long (i.e. big) lotus-like eyes, holding a conch, a disc, a mace, a lotus, covered with a yellow garment, shining with the Kaustubha, wearing a garland of wood-flowers, with the lustre of his ear-ring being brightened up by the grace of the face, adorned with a crown and bracelets, armlets and anklets, with his lotus-like face pleased, endowed with the grace of four arms (i.e. with four graceful arms), are of the form of Viṣṇu. There is no doubt about it, O Pārvatī. One certainly obtains Vaikuṇṭha by just seeing them, being devoted to them, feeding them or honouring them, O chief goddess.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYTWO

Remembering Viṣṇu

Pārvatī said:

1. (Tell me) how is Ananta Vāsudeva (i.e. Viṣṇu) remembered, hearing which there would be no delusion produced in human beings?

Mahādeva said:

2-23. O chief goddess, human beings always remember Viṣṇu on realising the truth. I remember Viṣṇu, as one oppressed with thirst (thinks of) water. Gods and others remember Viṣṇu in the same way as the world distressed with cold remembers (i.e. thinks of) fire. They remember Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, the lord of the master of the universe, as a loyal wife always remembers her husband. I remember Viṣṇu, as one afflicted with fear remembers a refuge, a greedy person thinks of wealth, or one longing for a son thinks of a son. I remember Viṣṇu, as one away (from one's house) remembers one's house, as cātaka thinks of spring, as theologians think of the knowledge of the supreme spirit. Swans long for the Mānasa (lake), sages for the recollection of Viṣṇu, devotees for devotion. In the same way I remember Viṣṇu. The body where the soul exists is dear to the beings. Those that live long for a (long) life. In the same way I remember Viṣṇu. As bees remember a flower, cakravākas the sun, those loving the soul think of devotion, so I remember Viṣṇu. As people distressed with darkness long for a lamp, in the same way men long for the recollection of Viṣṇu. As those afflicted with exertion think of rest, as the addicted ones think of sleep, as those free from laziness think of knowledge, so I remember Viṣṇu. Those who are afraid of sins should remember Viṣṇu, as the elephants think of a mountainous region, or the lions of a forest or elephants. As fire is produced in the sun-stone due to contact with (the rays of) the sun, in the same way devotion is produced (in the minds of men) for Viṣṇu by the contact of good people. As the moon-stone would resort to (i.e. give out) water by the contact (of the rays) of the moon, in the same way eternal release takes place by the contact of a devotee of Viṣṇu. As the lotus-plant on seeing the moon has its flowers bloomed, similarly, devotion entertained for the good always gives salvation to men. As a frightened bee would remember a lotus, and would, due to that recollection, have identity of form with it, as the cowherdesses remembered Viṣṇu (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) as their paramour and they were absorbed (by him), so I remember Viṣṇu. Those who think of Viṣṇu with a wicked mind, with

a deceitful mind, with greedy thoughts, without any desire, with devotion, affection or hatred, those who remember him as their lord, those who remember him deliberately or non-deliberately with whatever feeling enjoy happiness in this world and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. Oh, the greatness of Viṣṇu is wonderful and thrilling. Even his recollection by chance gives salvation in three ways (i.e. *sālokya* etc.). Not by abundant wealth, nor by great knowledge, is he seen as he is seen through devotion alone in a moment. Though near he stands away as collyrium in the eyes. The ancient one would be seen by his devotees through devotion (alone).

24-44. A man deluded by the lord's Māyā thinks as: 'This is the truth, this is the truth'. When the truth of devotion is obtained, then the (entire) world becomes full of Viṣṇu. O beautiful one, for getting happiness Indra and others secured nectar; but without devotion for Viṣṇu, they were unhappy. Having obtained the nectar in the form of devotion, no unhappiness comes again. Obtaining the position called Vaikuṇṭha he rejoices there in the vicinity of Viṣṇu. As the swan abandons water and always drinks milk (only), in the same way one should, abandoning (other) practices, resort to devotion for Viṣṇu. Giving up devotion for (any) other (deity) one should resort to devotion for Viṣṇu. How would one succeed in binding (i.e. putting) water with (i.e. in) a (piece of) cloth? That stage of life passed without devotion after having obtained the (human) body is in vain. Those men who advise (people) about religious practices without devotion for Viṣṇu, always fall into a fearful hell. There is no doubt about it. As a fool desires to cross (i.e. swim over) the ocean with his arms, so a (foolish) man desires to cross the ocean of the mundane existence without devotion for Viṣṇu. Even if they (i.e. Viṣṇu's devotees) are thrown down due to (the effect of) their deeds, they preserve devotion for Viṣṇu. As a penniless person, full of longing, desires (to get) the Meru (mountain), in the same way, O god, I long for devotion for you, since that devotion of me in the other (i.e. previous) existence, causes it. As in this world even a small fire burns various forests, so the devotion of the size of an atom which I have (i.e. resorted to will destroy my sins). Hundreds hear about devotion. Thousands understand it. But, O goddess, among them, only

one becomes a devotee. Various people will give (i.e. instruct) people (in) devotion. But a man himself practising it is seen to be one among crores. Worship laughs at devotion; success ridicules devotion. He who has such a (strong) feeling for the lord of gods alone takes (to) devotion. As from a fall into the ocean and entering into a tank there is a protection, similarly one takes to devotion according to his thoughts. The leaves of a tree sprinkled at its root are seen on the branches. O goddess, the fruit later proceeds by resorting to (Viṣṇu) only. As one who carries water fixes his mind (i.e. attention) on the pot (containing the water), similarly one should fix his mind on Viṣṇu and get salvation. In his childhood his mother gives (a child) a little jaggery. But the child, through greed, again asks for (more) jaggery. Due to Viṣṇu's grace they do not notice the difference as when water is put into water, milk into milk, or ghee into ghee. As the sun is everywhere, or the fire is everywhere, similarly one remaining in devotion, is never troubled by (fruits of his) acts(?). Ajāmila, giving up his duty and practising sin, certainly got salvation on remembering his son (called) Nārāyaṇa. All those devotees who, day and night, subsist on (Viṣṇu's) name only, live in Vaikuṇṭha. In this case, the Vedas are the anthority.

45-64. The fruit of the sacrifices like the horse-sacrifice is seen in heaven. Enjoying all that fruit they fall (from heaven). Similarly the devotees of Viṣṇu enjoy many pleasures. Having reached Vaikuṇṭha when will they return (to the earth)? He who is devoted to Viṣṇu, lives in Viṣṇu's heaven. See the example, O goddess. Due to devotion to Viṣṇu, he made hundreds of stones float on the water. The mind of Viṣṇu's devotee is the moonstone without water. A frog lives in water; a bee lives in a grove and perceives the fragrance of a lotus-plant. In the same way Viṣṇu's devotee lives in his devotion. Some live on the bank of Gaṅgā. Some (at a distance of) a hundred yojanas. One gets the fruit due to Gaṅgā; the other devotion for Viṣṇu. Those that have turned away their faces from Viṣṇu are like the camel that always carries the camphor and agaru (sandal) but does not know their fragrance. Those that are averse to Viṣṇu are like the deer that smell a tree, when they desire a fragrance, but do not notice the musk in their navels. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, as (giving) advices to fools is useless, similarly advice

to one averse to Viṣṇu-devotion is in vain. Water drunk by a serpent becomes poison. Similarly devotion to Viṣṇu for devotees of other deities is poison. Those who are near a lamp or a mirror do not see it without sight, similarly those averse to Viṣṇu (do not see him). As fire is covered by smoke, a mirror by dirt, an embryo by amnion, similarly Kṛṣṇa is covered in (i.e. by) the body. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, as ghee always remains in milk, oil in a sesamum-seed, similarly Viṣṇu exists in the mobile and the immobile (objects). As many gems are held (together) by a thread, similarly the universe including Brahmā and others is woven in Brahman of the form of intelligence. As fire existing in wood is seen after friction only, similarly omnipresent Viṣṇu is seen by means of meditation only. At first there is one lamp. Then thousands are produced (i.e. lighted) from it. Similarly one Viṣṇu alone exists after having pervaded everything. A flash always remains in water at sunrise, and is seen in various ways in the pond. That Viṣṇu is like that in the world. Wind even in its natural state always carries various fragrances. Similarly the god, dwelling in all beings, enjoys the constituents of Prakṛti. As sugar due to its contact with water, turns into water, similarly the soul, being like them (i.e. the acts) enjoys the fruits of his acts. The earth, due to its contact with water, has many trees. Similarly (the soul) due to the contact with Prakṛti's constituents, is born in many stocks.

65-75. He, the steady one, lives in (the body of) an elephant or a gnat, a deity or a human being and is neither superior (in one) nor inferior (in another). As the moon is noticed in water, in the same way he is seen in all those beginning with Brahmā to a clump of grass, men, gods, sacrifices, and serpents that are there on the earth. He that is seen is existence, intelligence, bliss and Śiva (auspicious). He is the great lord. He is also said to be Viṣṇu. He is omnipresent Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu). He is known from the Upaniṣads; he is the master of all; he is beyond time; and is sound. O goddess, he who knows him to be like this is undoubtedly (his) devotee. Though one, he should be known to be many; and though many, to be one. Due to his various names and forms he is said to be many on the earth. The sun's lustre does not grow due to the eyes, but the sight

grows due to the sun. The supreme soul (as the individual soul) is always present in every body, as in every jar there is space. (And even) when the jar is broken, it (still) exists. In every form he is like that (i.e. has that form); and when it (i.e. the form) is broken, he remains very stable. As a form made of wood drops (down) without a master, in the same way the body, having differences like an insect, falls without the soul. The various kinds (of forms) of gold, become as before (i.e. gold) due to (being heated by) fire. In the same way the devotees attain the former form. Fools see (i.e. think) the sun to be lustreless due to being screened by a cloud. In the same way fools of ignorant minds do not know that lord who is described by the Upaniṣads as not admitting an alternative and as formless.

76-90. In accordance with his will he becomes one having a form, from his (condition of being) formless. From him ether without sound and quality is produced. Air was produced from ether. Then it had a sound. From air sprang up light, and from light water was produced. In that water was Virāṭ, having a universal form and of a bright interior. In the lotus of his navel there were crores of universes. From it (arose) Prakṛti (and) Puruṣa and then the world of three kinds was produced. From the union of the two arose the combination of the elements. The product of Viṣṇu in *sāttvika*. Brahmā is said to be endowed with the quality of *rajas*. Śiva is said to be endowed with the quality of *tamas*. They have urged all this. In the world there is one condition called Brāhmī (i.e. of Brahmā) due to the seed of the act (of a being). Viṣṇu completely withdraws the world due to it. This immutable lord Viṣṇu then remains there. Thus Viṣṇu is present everywhere—in the beginning, middle and end. People determined by (the effects of) their acts do not know (the truth) due to ignorance. He would cause (people) to do the acts that are proper for the castes at (different) times. That act which is intended for god Viṣṇu is not the cause of (i.e. does not lead to) conception (i.e. birth). This is always thought over by all the sages in the Upaniṣads and holy texts. This knowledge of Brahman is in the body. I shall tell it. Mind alone is the cause and effect of good and bad (acts). Everything is purified by mind. Then it is the ancient Brahman. Mind alone is always

the kinsman and the foe (also). Some are emancipated by mind; some are troubled by mind. Everything is renounced in it, but they have done acts outwardly. Acts when done in this fashion alone, do not taint (the doer), as a lotus-leaf is not tainted by even drops of water, (or) as fire when put into (another) fire. What is the use of devotion? When the flavour of devotion is known, then salvation is not liked. By means of the Yoga of eight kinds[1] Viṣṇu is not reached in this existence. Viṣṇu is reached by devotion and would always be easily accessible.

91-100. Knowledge is obtained through the Upaniṣads. That which is to be known is obtained by means of knowledge. When that which is to be known is obtained, then the world is a void. Viṣṇu is reached through (mental) power. What is the use of the eightfold Yoga? Of all dispositions purity of disposition is commended. When the beloved is embraced by one, one gets the effect as is one's disposition. One having sandals on one's feet feels the earth to be full of hide. One looks upon the world as one's mind is. The nimba tree, though sprinkled with milk, would not give up its bitterness. Beings go to (i.e. behave in conformity with) their nature. Advice is useless. How would one obtain the fruits and the leaves of the (mango) tree after having cut it off? Why should one pass one's life with a desire for the pleasures of senses? As medicine is cooked in a pan of lapis lazuli and then the drug is burnt, in the same way, how would the existence be in vain? How would a good man, after putting the treasure in his house, do service? How would one rejoice on another path (by) leaving the lord of Vaikuṇṭha (i.e. Viṣṇu)? What is the use of the recital of the Vedas by those who are without devotion? A cāṇḍāla having devotion is worshipped even by gods. What is the use of mirrors for him who has put on a bracelet on his hand? The servants (i.e. the devotees) to whom affluence is given by gods like Brahmā, Rudra, do not take anything that is offered to the lord.

---

1. Aṣṭavidha Yoga—The eightfold means of Yoga consists of the disciplines of: (1) restraint (yama); (2) culture or cultivating good habits like purification of the body, contentment etc; (3) posture (āsana); (4) breath-control (prāṇāyāma); (5) withdrawl of the senses (pratyāhara); (6) attention (dhāraṇā); (7) meditation (dhyāna); and (8) concentration (samādhi).

101-109. It is better to give to a devotee who is poor. How can there be meditation on Kṛṣṇa having no body? Many (devotees) seeing him of a form, have, through devotion, gone to his position. How can worship or devotion be possible in the case of one that is non-existent? The wise ones recommend (worship and devotion) in the case of one that has a form. How can a man go along a vacant path without a support? This master has a form. That lord is formless. The one having a form is easily seen. The formless one is not seen. There is pleasure of service of the one having a form; no (such) pleasure in the case of serving a formless one. The formless one himself is known through him who has a form. When the body is horripilated by the grace of the recollection of Viṣṇu, when tears of joy are in the eyes, then salvation becomes a slave. How does the sin committed in childhood, perish? (It perishes) by means of worship, gifts, vows, (visits to) holy places, mutterings (of hymns), sacrifices dedicated to you. How should one, giving up one's duty, practise severe penance? It is better to die in (i.e. while doing) one's duty. Another's duty is fraught with fear. How should one, giving up the practice laid down by holy texts, practise severe penance? A fool without (remaining in) the stage of human life, would not obtain success. The castes are made by Brahmā, and they have been assigned their respective duties.

110-124. Wealth that comes through the performance of the duty of one's own caste is said to be white. That little gift, given with devotion, made with white wealth, gives great religious merit and it cannot be reckoned. The gift given by men with the wealth brought for domestic rites through contact with mean people, would not be fruitful. They would not share its fruit. A fool, weak in knowledge, obtains that kind of stock which (is in conformity with the) kind of acts he performs with a desire for pleasure. The (fruit of the) act done in this world is had in the otherworld. If in the case of a man doing righteous acts, pain is produced, then he should not be distressed. That is (the result of) the deeds of the former body (i.e. existence). Grief alone is produced in the case of the man committing sins. O chief goddess, at that time one should not be delighted. As the master leads the beasts tied with a rope, men also are similarly led by the bond of their deeds on the earth. A monkey

dwelling in forest dances in every house; in the same way the beings are taken through all stocks by (their) deeds. As the master while playing sends forth a ball according to his desire, similarly a being is taken to happiness or unhappiness by his deeds. The being bound by (the effects of) his deeds, is unable to remove the bond. Gods and other sages also are bound by (the effects of) their deeds. Even the serpents remaining on Rudra's body consume poison on Kailāsa. They are unable to enjoy nectar. The effect of deeds (Karmayoni?) prevail. The charioteer or the Sun, who is said by the wise to give a sound body is a cripple. The effects of deeds (Karmayoni?) pravail. A royal sage Iadradyumna became an elephant due to his deeds. The result of deeds in that case was made ineffective by the powerful lord (?) All gods like Rudra, Brahmā, men and demons, being bound by (the effects of) acts, move on the earth. Viṣṇu formerly created the entire world, (and is) influenced by acts.

125-139. Those acts, dependent on Viṣṇu, perish by means of (repeating) the name of Rāma. Water is present everywhere; but that one at Prayāga gives salvation. To those who do the acts like this, worship of Keśava gives salvation. The being who does an act for the pleasure of senses, and would, through egotism think of the body, should go through an expiation, remembering (Viṣṇu). He undergoes the fruits of his past acts (only). The (fruit of) his acts does not grow later. Some praise the Planets; some evil spirits and goblins. Some praise deities; some have talked about the herbs. Some talk about a hymn, about a super-human power, about intellect or valour. So also about exertion, boldness, courage and prudence. All follow their desires talking about acts resulting from egotism. This is my definite idea. This is what is told by the former wise men. When a being is full of religious merit and there is no sin (in him), and when he has the two-fold knowledge, then his merit would be pleasant. When his sin and religious merit are equal, he remains in (i.e. doing) acts. When he has attained the equanimity of mind, he would reach the place of joy. Of him, who has discarded everything outwardly, but would long for (every thing) mentally, such a behaviour is useless and he will have to undergo (fruits of) his sins. A man does acts outwardly; but mentally he is desireless. Such a sacrifice is mediocre. He would not obtain

its complete fruit. Discarding acts outwardly, and mentally depending upon (i.e. looking upon everything as) void – such a sacrifice is said to be the best – difficult to be had even by the meditating sages. Some abandon everything through anger; some through the power of discussion. Some discard everything with difficulty. All (such) sacrifices are mediocre. A man endowed with devotion through good mind, and not influenced by anger etc., obtains a good position, though smeared with (the effects of) acts. He who is dropped from abstract meditation, would be born in the house of the pure and the rich or in the family – chief being that of a brāhmaṇa – of the intelligent meditating sages. In a short time he acquires complete abstract meditation.

140-153. Due to abstract meditation, devotion (to) and grace (of the lord), he would reach the position of Brahman of the nature of) intelligence and joy. How can one wash off (the effect of) one's act with a harmful act as mud with mud or blood with blood? How can a sacrifice full of a harmful act be capable of destroying (the effect of one's) acts? Sacrifices performed with a desire for (going to) heaven give little happiness in heaven. Even though many, the pleasures there are transitory. Without devotion for Viṣṇu, there is no eternal happiness in (i.e. from) them. (Except) a sovereign empire giving pleasure and happiness in heaven, I do not desire anything else. I am afraid of living in a womb (i.e. of rebirth). With (hammers of) iron a stone alone is broken, and not a ruby. A crane eats aquatic beings, (but) would avoid frogs etc. Similarly, Yama, the destroyer of everything, would avoid Viṣṇu's servants. He who protects is the one that removes difficulties, and is said to be the guardian. He lodges at his place him who has (committed) hundreds of faults; since Kṛṣṇa favours him who has committed an offence. He gets the fruit today. What does the protector do? In the same way, the soul in this body, shows favour to them depending upon others.[1] Along with the strong, he does not slowly go to the other end.[2] He gave salvation to the hunter, and himself emancipated Kubjā. He is difficult to be had (i.e. seen even) in a dream by Brahmā and others, but is easily accessible in a cowherd's house. When he ate what was left over

1, 2. verses 148, 149 etc. and many others in this chapter are not clear.

by the cowherds, he himself emancipated them. O goddess, the highest soul, Viṣṇu, is always praised by the meditating sages. The immutable Puruṣa, along with Lakṣmī, is amazing. Those who everyday recite this narration, are freed from all sins, and go to the eternal position of Viṣṇu. One who recites it with this devotion near (the image of) Viṣṇu, would obtain the highest position after enjoying happiness in this world.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYTHREE

The Holy Places in Jambūdvīpa

Pārvatī said:

1. O you of a good vow, tell me about the holy places that exist on this island. This island is fashioned by the lord as the king of all islands. O lord, favouring me, tell me about them with (i.e. counting) their number.

Mahādeva said:

2-12. The Omnipresent (lord) should be seen in all beings on the earth. Whatever primary substance, with the mobile and the immobile, is seen in the seven worlds, is not seen or heard by me to be without him. Therefore, the great god Viṣṇu, Keśava, who removes affliction, would live in the form of a holy place on this island, O chief goddess. I shall certainly tell you about all the holy places. First is the holy place (called) Puṣkara, auspicious and best among the holy places. Second holy place is Vārāṇasī, giving salvation. Third sacred spot is Naimiṣa, said to be purifying by the sages. Fourth is Prayāga, said to be the best among the holy places. Fifth is said to be Kārmuka that has sprung up on Gandhamādana. Sixth is the holy place called Mānasa, pleasing to the gods. Seventh is Viśvakāya on the auspicious Avara mountain. Eighth is called Gautama, formerly fashioned on Mandara. Ninth is Madotkaṭa; tenth is Caitrarathaka. Eleventh is Kānyakubja where Vāmana (i.e. Viṣṇu) dwells. Twelfth is Malaya; then there is Kubjāmraka. (Then there are) Viśveśvara, Girikarṇa, Kedāra, giving a good

position (i.e. leading to salvation). Bāhya is on the surface of Himālaya; similariy there is Gopaka on Gokarṇa. On the Himālaya is Sthāneśvara; and Bilvapatrika on Bilvaka. The holy place Mādhava is on Śrīśaila; and Bhadra is on Bhadreśvara. Vijaya is said to be on Vārāha, and Vaiṣṇava on Vaiṣṇava mountain. On Rudrakoṭa is Raudra; and on the Kāliñjara mountain is Paitrya. The holy place Kampila is on Kampila, and Karkoṭaka on Mukuṭa.

13-30. O Chief goddess, the place holy due to Śālagrāma is on the bank of the Gallikā. On (the bank of) Narmadā is one called Śiva, and on (the bank of) Māyā is Viśvarūpaka. On the Raivata mountain have come up (the holy places, namely) Utpalākṣa, Sahasrākṣa. On (the bank of) Gaṅgā is Pitṛtīrtha, so also is Viṣṇupādodbhava. On (the bank of) Vipāśā is Vipāpā, and Puṇḍravardhana is at Pāṭala. Nārāyaṇa is on Supārśva, and Viṣṇu temple on Trikūṭa. On Vipula is one named Vipula, and Kalyāṇa is on Malaya mountain. At Koṭitīrtha is Kaurava, and Sugandha is on Gandhamādana. Trisandhyā is at Kubjāmraka, and Haripriya at Gaṅgādvāra. In the region of Vindhya is Śaila, and Sārasvata is said to be on Badari. On (the bank of) the Kālindī is Kalparūpa, and Sāyaka is said to be on Sahya. Cāndra is in Candra region, and Ramaṇa is the chief among the holy places. On (the bank of) Yamunā is (the one) called Mṛga; and Kurūdbhava is on Karavīra. The holy place called Umā is on the Vināyaka mountain. Ārogya is in the Bhāskara country. Maheśvara is at Mahākāla. A holy place is named Abhayada. On Vindhya is one called Amṛta. Viśvarūpa is in Maṇḍapa. In Īśvara city is one called Svāhā. On (the bank of) Pracaṇḍā is Vaigaleya, and Cāṇḍika in Amarakaṇṭaka. At the holy place of Prabhāsa is Someśvara, and there is also Puṣkara. Devamātra is situated on the bank of Pārāvata on Sarasvatī. At Mahāpadma is Mahālaya, and Piṅgaleśvara on (the bank of) Payoṣṇī. So also is a holy place on (the bank of) Siṁhikā, and at Saurava one called Ravi. In the Kṛttikā-region is the holy place Kārtika; and Śaṅkara on mountain Śaṅkara. Similarly at the confluence of Subhadrā and Sindhu is a divine holy place called Utpala. Then there is Gāṇapatya on the mountain called Viṣṇu. Then on Jālandhara is the holy place which is called Viṣṇumukha. At Tāra is one called Tāraka on the mountain

called Viṣṇu. Pauṇḍra is in the Devadāruvana, and Pauśka in the Kāśmīra region. The snowy Bhauma is on Himālaya, so also are Catuṣṭika and Pauṣṭika. Similarly the holy place Kapālamocana has come up at Māyāpura. Then is the holy place Śaṅkhoddhāra (of) the god holding the conch. At Piṇḍa is one named Piṇḍa, and Vaikhānasa at Siddha. On (the bank of) Acchoda is Viṣṇukāma, giving religious merit, sensuous enjoyment, worldly prosperity and salvation. On the northern bank is Auṣadhya, and Kuśodaka is at Kuśadvīpa. Manmatha is on Hemakūṭa, and Satyavādana on Kumuda. At the bank of Vadantī is the holy place called Āśvaka, and Mātṛka is said to exist on Vindhya.

31-40. On Citta is the holy place (called) Brahmamaya which is said to be (the most) purifying of all holy places. O beautiful lady, listen to the description of the holy place best of all these. A holy place (like) Viṣṇumaya never existed (before) nor will be there. Merely by uttering (its) name, one who has killed a brāhmaṇa, or snatched gold, or has killed a child or a cow, is freed (from the sin) due to Viṣṇu's grace. In the Kali age Dvāravatī is charming, and god Viṣṇu is excellent. The salvation of those men who see (the image of) the lord, is certain. O great goddess, I, remaining among the wise, thus think of that blessed lord Viṣṇu, the master of all. These hundred and eight holy places are told here. He who mutters their names or hears them is free from all sins. He who, after bathing in these holy places, sees (the image of) Nārāyaṇa Hari (i.e. Viṣṇu), is freed from all sins and goes to the ancient Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, said to be the holy place purifying the worlds. Those best men who go to (these holy places) go to the highest position (i.e. salvation). One should get this to be heard (i.e. recited) at (the time of) a rite in honour of the dead ancestors. Enjoying pleasures in this world, one goes to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. (By reciting these names) at the time of the gift of a cow, or the gift at the time of a śrāddha, or (by reciting it) everyday, or at the rite of worshipping a deity, one attains the highest Brahman.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYFOUR

The Greatness of Vetravatī

Mahādeva said:

1-10. I shall tell (you) the greatness of Vetravatī. Listen, O beautiful lady. By bathing there (i.e. in the river) men are free till deluge. Vṛtra made a tank called Mahāgambhīra. That divine one, destroyer of heaps of great sins, came out from that tank. O best goddess, like Gaṅgā this is the best river. Merely on looking at her heaps of sins come to an end. O goddess, I shall tell you an old account, hearing which sinners are freed from faults and bondage of (their) acts. A king (named Vidāruṇa) ruled in the city of Campaka. He was always wicked, of a wicked form, and he very much harassed people. He was impious, the (very) form of impiety, and given to censuring Viṣṇu. He disregarded deities and brāhmaṇas, and was a great hater of the (four) stages of human life. He was rich, and was given to condemning the Vedas; he was foolish and cruel. He was a rogue, was interested in heterodox doctrines and outraged others' wives. His name was Vidāruṇa, and he was a fool. Once, by chance, he came to that river (Vetravatī). O chief goddess, he, intent on hunting, himself became a leper due to his censuring brāhmaṇas. He talked nonsense, was wicked-hearted, a rogue and a cruel beast. He was always engaged in censuring the Vedas and polluted cows and holy texts.

11-31. The king, surrounded by his friends, who was like this, was wandering in a forest; being oppressed by thirst, he got down from (his) horse, drank water and went home. Due to the drinking of the water, his leprosy certainly disappeared. Especially the mind of the king became clear. O chief goddess, at that time in (the mind of) him devotion for Viṣṇu sprang up. From that time he always bathed (in Vetravatī). O chief goddess, he became spotless and endowed with handsomeness. Having enjoyed pleasure in this world and having performed many sacrifices, he gave gifts to brāhmaṇas and went to the position of Viṣṇu. Knowing this, O goddess, those brāhmaṇas who bathe especially in Vetravatī, are freed, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. The brāhmaṇas—or a kṣatriya, or a vaiśya or a

śūdra—who bathe here are freed, O best goddess. O goddess, an outcast or a censurer of the Vedas, who, in the month of Kārtika or Māgha, bathes at the confluence of rivers, is free from sins. Especially a killer of a brāhmaṇa who bathes there where her confluence with Sābhramatī is seen, is always freed. O sinless one, the village there is a divine city, of the form of heaven. O goddess, Brahmā practised many abstract meditations there. No rebirth is (had by one) who has bathed and eaten there. O goddess, she is said to be another Gaṅgā, especially in the Kali age. Those men who desire happiness and wealth, who desire heaven, bathe there repeatedly, enjoy happiness in this world, and go to the eternal (position) of Viṣṇu. Those born in the solar race and the lunar race, who came here and bathed in Vetravatī obtained bliss. She removes misery when seen, and mental sin when touched. O goddess, one who bathes in and drinks (her) water undoubtedly enjoys salvation. By bathing (in her), muttering hymns and performing sacrifices (on her bank) one gets infinite fruit. One should go to the holy place of Vārāṇasī, and practise Cāndrāyaṇa-vow. O best goddess, the religious merit on having gone there is great. If a man dies especially on (the bank of) Vetravatī, he becomes four-armed, and goes to the highest (position) of Viṣṇu. O best goddess, all the holy places, deities, dead ancestors that are there on the earth, live here in Vetravatī. O you beautiful lady, what is the use of talking much about other things repeatedly? O you ancient one, there is no other holy place like Vetravatī on the earth. O great goddess, I, Viṣṇu, so also Brahmā, gods and great sages, deities all stay in Vetravatī. Those who bathe in Vetravatī, once, or twice or especially three times (a day) are freed. There is no doubt about it.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYFIVE

The Greatness of Sābhramatī

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-9. O goddess, I shall aptly describe the greatness of Sābhramatī. The best sage Kaśyapa practised severe penance. For many years he practised severe penance on the charming Arbuda mountain full of various trees. Having gone there where the charming, sin-destroying Sarasvatī flows, the sage Kaśyapa practised penance. O goddess, one day he went to the Naimiṣa (forest where) all the sages were narrating stories in many ways. Then the sages properly asked that sage Kaśyapa: "O Kaśyapa, for our pleasure, bring Gaṅgā here, O lord. That best river will pass by your name." Having heard their words, and having saluted those brāhmaṇas, he came to the Arbuda forest, near the bank of Sarasvatī. He practised there very severe penance. That brāhmaṇa Kaśyapa propitiated me. I then appeared in person in front of that excellent brāhmaṇa. "Well-being to you; ask for a boon that is in your mind."

Kaśyapa said:

10-14. O lord of the world, you are capable of granting a boon. Give me specially that Gaṅgā which is on your head and which is pure and destroys sins. O great god, I salute you.

Then, O goddess, I said: "O best brāhmaṇa, take (her)." Then taking off a hair from my matted hair, I gave him the Gaṅgā. Taking her, the best brāhmaṇa gladly went to his place. The holy place named Keśarandhra is the abode of Kaśyapa. Surrounded by sages, O chief goddess, he went there. That excellent river Kāśyapī was brought by Kaśyapa, on merely seeing which, (even) a killer of a brāhmaṇa was freed.

Pārvatī said:

15-16. Tell me about the religious merit acquired by just a bath, O lord of the world. You are kind. Show compassion to me. What would be the religious merit due to seeing her, and what due to the bath? Tell me (that), O lord of gods. O Brahman, please tell me what kind of greatness (she has).

Mahādeva said:

17-35. I have heard about many holy places and sanctuaries. Due to the grace of lord Viṣṇu many rivers flowing into the ocean (like) Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Revā, Tāpī, so also Mahānadī, Godāvarī, Tuṅgabhadrā, Kauśikī, so also Gallikā, (and) Kāverī, Vedikā, Bhadrā, Śarayū, Pāpahāriṇī (destroyer of sins), so also other various rivers, all instant sin-destroyers (are heard about by me). The king of holy places—Prayāga, Kāśī, and Puṣkara, so also the one called Naimiṣāraṇya, so also the holy place Amarakaṇṭaka, the excellent holy place of Dvārakā, the excellent Arbudāraṇya—such divine and other various holy places, I have heard about due to Viṣṇu's grace. Formerly, Bhagīratha, desiring (to go to) Viṣṇu's heaven, had solicited me. Then, O Pārvatī, I gave him this Gaṅgā. On the words of the sages I again gave her to Kaśyapa. This Kāśyapī Gaṅgā always removes diseases and blemishes. O beautiful lady, I shall tell you. Listen, what she is called in each age. In Kṛta (age) she was called Kṛtavatī and Girikarṇikā in Tretā. She is named Candanā in Dvāpara, and she is known as Sābhramatī in Kali (age). Those men who everyday (go to her for bathing) are freed from all sins and go to Viṣṇu's (eternal position). O goddess, that fruit which men get by bathing at the holy place Plakṣa, and in Sarasvatī, is got by a daily bath in Sābhramatī everyday. There is no doubt about it, since Vyāsa's statement is to that effect. A man gets that fruit by bathing in Sābhramatī which he gets by bathing in the later half of Śrāvaṇa or everyday, or by properly offering a śrāddha on the new-moon day. A man gets that fruit by bathing in Sābhramatī which he gets in Kārtika when (the Sun) is joined with the Kṛttikā (constellation) at Śrīsthala in front of (the image of) Mādhava. O goddess, this is the greatest (river). It is purifying in all worlds. She is most blessed, is pure, and destroys sins, O goddess. On (the bank of) Sābhramatī always live those connected with the east (i.e. the Easterners), the Northerners. The Westerners and the Southerners all go to Kheṭaka everyday near Brahmā, under the pretext of a pilgrimage only. O goddess, there is no doubt that they come there on the full-moon day of Kārtika. There they offer a śrāddha and feed brāhmaṇas.

36-50. (There) men perform various religious rites daily, so also various sacrifices. They make various gifts everyday in all the four ages. No doubt should be entertained in this matter. Yavakrīta, and Raibhya, Kakṣīvat, so also Uśija, Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras, so also Kaṇva, and the intelligent Punarvasu, Bandin, endowed with virtues, (all) have resorted to the Eastern direction. So also the magnanimous ones (living) in the north—like Madhumat, so also the noble Subandhu, and the powerful Dattātreya, similarly Śikhin, Dīrghatamas, so also Gautama and Kaśyapa, in the same way Śvetaketu, Kahoḍa, Pulaha and Devala, and Viśvāmitra and Bharadvāja, and powerful Jamadagni, Ṛcīca's son Garga, so also the sage Uddālaka, and Devaśarman, Dhaumya, Āstika, so also Kaśyapa, and Lomaśa, Nābhiketu, and Lomaharṣaṇa, so also the sage Ugraśravas, Bhārgava Cyavana, Vālakhilya and others, all go there. Bathing (there), fasting and very highly devoted to Viṣṇu holding conches, discs and maces, they always stay on the bank. Pitṛtīrtha, named Gayā, is auspicious and best among all holy places. There the grandsire, the lord of the gods, himself lives. The dead ancestors, desiring a portion (of the offerings) of a śrāddha, have sung a verse: Many sons should be desired; even one of them would go to Gayā, or would perform a horse-sacrifice, or would let loose a black bull. In the same way Vārāṇasī is auspicious, and is always dear to the dead ancestors, which due to my proximity, gives enjoyments and salvation. By my order the lord of gods called Bindumādhava, always especially dwells at Vārāṇasī, O chief goddess. Therefore, this my city is always the most blessed and the greatest. Vimaleśvara is auspicious, and is a holy place dear to the dead ancestors. Pitṛtīrtha—Prayāga—is endowed with all holy places.

51-60. They come into the water of Sābhramatī on my words. The noble Vaṭeśvara is endowed with Viṣṇu. O chief goddess, Daśāśvamedha and the auspicious Gaṅgādvāra always live in Sābhramatī by my order. Nandā, Lalitādevī and the holy place with seven streams; so also the (holy place) called Mitrapada and Śaṅkara's abode Kedāra; and Gaṅgāsāgara as they call it; all this, being full of holy places, is auspicious. Like this there is the holy place called Brahmasaras in the pool of Śatadru. So also the holy place called Naimiṣa. All these, O

goddess, undoubtdely live in the water of Sābhramatī. The auspicious river Śvetavalkalinī, (the river) Śvetahiraṇmayī, (the river) Hastimatī, or Arthaghnī, flowing towards the ocean—all these are dear to the dead ancestors, and give the fruit of a crore of śrāddhas. Śrāddhas should be offered there by sons for the good of their dead ancestors. There is a city named Pāṭala or Vāḍava, O beautiful lady. All these rivers have always especially reached (i.e. flowed into) Sābhramatī. Those men on the earth who bathe there and offer gifts, enjoy happiness in this world and go to the eternal (place) of Viṣṇu. Jambūdvīpa is very meritorious, where religious merit grows. There is a very meritorious (region), called Ārya, fulfilling all desires.

61-81a. (Then) there is a holy place called Nīlakaṇṭha; (then there is) Nandahrada; so also the holy place Rudrahrada, and the auspicious Rudra-mahālaya. Presenting themselves, the very auspicious Mandākinī, so also the great river Acchodā—these two flow into Sābhramatī. Due to offering piṇḍas (i.e. oblations to dead ancestors) into Gaṅgā, the wise say that these—Dhūmrā, Mitrapada, similarly Vaijanātha, Dṛśadvara, river Kṣiprā, Mahākāla, so also the mountain Kāliñjara, Gaṅgodbhūta, Harodbheda, Narmadākāra—are equal (in religious merit). O chief goddess, these places sacred to Brahmā are on the northern bank of Sābhramatī, are protected by gods led by Brahmā. O great goddess, they destroy people's sins merely by their being remembered. Then what to say of those men offering śrāddhas, O chief goddess? Oṁkāra, a holy place of the dead ancestors, the water of Kāverī, Kapilā, the union of Caṇḍavegā.—bathing in this would be a hundredfold more meritorious than (at) Kurukṣetra. O goddess, formerly (Śiva's) attendants took the holy place Kadamba, along with the chief of the attendants, to the confluence of Vātaghnī. This congregation of the holy places is narrated by me by way of illustration. Even the lord of speech cannot correctly (describe) the expanse of the holy places. Truth, pity and control of senses are holy places. One should certainly bathe in her holy place with effort. The morning is of the three muhūrtas (i.e. periods) up to saṅgava[1]—a bath at this time is dear to the gods. Mid-day

1. Saṅgava—Name of a particular part of day, said to be three

consists of three muhūrtas (i.e. period); after that is afternoon. Bathing, offering piṇḍas causes delight to the dead ancestors. Evening has three muhūrtas. One should not perform a śrāddha etc. at that time. That time is called demonish, and is censured for all (religious) acts. Always the fifteen muhūrtas of the day are well-known. Among them the eighth one is said to be *kutapa.* Since at mid-day the sun becomes dull (in lustre), therefore, it gives infinite fruit by offering piṇḍas to the dead ancestors. Mid-day, a vessel made of buffalo's horns, so also a Nepāla-blanket, silver, darbhas, so also cows, daughter's son, and sesamum-seeds are *kutapa.* Sin is said to be mean. Since all these eight cause remorse for it, they are known as *kutapa.* That group of four muhūrtas subsequent to *kutapa,* and the group of five is desired as the time for a śrāddha. Darbhas and sesamum-seeds are said to have sprung from the body of Viṣṇu for the protection of śrāddha. Thus the residents of heaven say. Those living at the holy places should offer water with sesamum-seeds to the dead by standing in water and with darbhas in their hands. Thus the śrāddha is not harmed.

81b-94. Giving the holy places these names and putting them into Sābhramatī, O goddess, I gave (the river) to Kaśyapa. This Kaśyapa is my devotee, and he is always dear to me. Therefore, I gave (him) this pure Gaṅgā destroying sins. O noble one, having placed myself—I am having Śaṅkara as my name there—at the holy place, viz. Brahmacārika, I, called Īśa, remain there for the good of the world, and am named Brahmacārīśa. When in the vicinity of Sābhramatī, one devoutly worships especially Brahmacārīśa in the Kali-age, one enjoys pleasure in this world and goes to the great position of Śiva. Even if a man suffering from severe diseases goes there, his disease quickly vanishes on merely seeing the deity, O great goddess. When the man with his senses controlled, and fasting, and being very steady, devoutly worships (the lord), then I appear before him in the form of a meditating sage. I give him the desired objects. O you beautiful lady, I am telling the truth and the truth only. I quickly remove the disease of those

---

muhūrtas after Prātastana or early dawn and to form the second of the five divisions of day.

persons who especially come to my place. I have described diseases to be of eightyfour names. Each one of the diseases would perish merely on seeing (the image). O daughter of the (Himalaya) Mountain, my phallus would not be there. My place is only there. There is no doubt about it. On one occasion the powerful king Brahmadatta of the solar race, of a severe penance, once practised penance there for a long time, O chief goddess. There he practised in many ways the (vow called) Pañcāgnisādhana.[1] He practised many austerities like fasting for a month etc.

95-113. In this way the king practised a severe penance for a long time. Then I appeared before him in person for (granting him) a boon, O beautiful lady. "O Brahmadatta, listen to (these) great (i.e. important) words. I shall undoubtedly grant you everyday whatever you desire." He said: "O lord of gods, if whatever I desire is (to be) given, then always grant me one boon. May the lord be born by my name on the earth, O lord of gods." O sinless one, being pleased with those words, I granted him the boon. (Since) then, O chief goddess, I stay with him. (To him) who remaining here, fasts and is fully devoted, I grant the desired objects as long as the fourteen Indras rule. Listen to what I give to the brāhmaṇas who, having come here, especially mutter the Rudra hymn etc. A man obtains quickly all that is desired in the Kali-age, like pleasure from his wife, pleasure from his son; it increases wealth. It gives glory and affluence, and destroys diseases etc. O Pārvatī, my devotees on the earth come here and perform rites like bathing, giving gifts in this terrible Kali-age. O chief goddess, I give the desired objects. This is the truth and the truth only. The king, having posted there another celibate named Gaṅgādhara, and having lived there for five days, then went to his own kingdom. The very great Brahmadatta, famous in the world, who knew piety, ruled for five myriad years. Then the king, having enjoyed the kingdom for some time, went to Śiva's world, (and) to the excellent position called Brahmā. The two gods having my name stay there—one is Brahmācārīśa, and the other one is said to be

1. Pañcāgnisādhana—A kind of penance in which one has to bear five fires: one in front, one at the back, one on the left, and one on the right, and the fifth fire is the sun.

Gaṅgādhara. To those men who worship especially at my place, I certainly give everything wanted by them in the world. The place itself is always the Phallus. Men should always go there. That wise man who offers there flowers, incense, eatables of various kinds, certainly obtains everything. I give all to them who worship at my place with bilva-leaves, flowers and sandal etc. He who everyday listens to the account of Brahmacārin, obtains happiness in this world, and goes to the vicinity of Śiva, where god Gaṅgādhara, Bhūtida (i.e. giver of happiness) always dwells.

114-135. The other one called Brahmacārīśa always lives (there). From them one certainly obtains the position of Śiva by means of meditation. A disease perishes on seeing him. By worshipping (him) a man would obtain (long) life. O chief goddess, there is no doubt that by bathing there a man would enjoy salvation. O beautiful lady, listen. I shall describe a very wonderful holy place, known as Rājakhaḍga, especially on the Sābhramatī. King Vaikartana, born in the solar race, was of a bad conduct, sinful, and censured brāhmaṇas. He bore malice against his preceptors; was always angry; censured all (religious) acts; he was always interested in others' wives; and he always harmed Viṣṇu. He always harassed his subjects in many ways. Such a wicked one, as he was, lived on the earth always. O beautiful lady, listen properly. When some time passed, leprosy was produced in (i.e. overcame) him due to his sin (and) his (ill) luck. Observing his body, and thinking repeatedly as to what to do, he was full of anxiety. Once, by chance, he went into a forest for sport. Having reached the bank of Sābhramatī there, he remained there. He bathed there, and drank excellent water. Due to the bath there, his body instantly was seen to be divine. His figure was seen to be of good gold, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. Just then the king certainly became (like that). Having got the divine form, the king enjoyed the kingdom there for some time, and then went to the highest position of Śiva, O chief goddess. Then this holy place, called Rājakhaḍga, came up. He who bathes here and gives gifts, enjoys happiness in this world, and goes to the eternal (place) of Viṣṇu. They have no disease and never have grief. A man who everyday bathes in this (holy place) called Rājakhaḍga, would obtain

heaven, and is honoured by Brahmā and others. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he was called Satyeśvara in the Kṛta age, Bhuvaneśvara in the Tretā age, and Rājeśvara in the Dvāpara age. In this Kali age, the lord of the universe has vanished. Therefore this holy place, called Rājakhaḍga, has come up. Those men who devoutly offer oblations to their dead ancestors here, are declared to be of religious acts on the earth. The killers of brāhmaṇas or of children, who bathe here, get free from blemishes, and go to the vicinty of Śiva. The dead ancestors of them who offer a dark (cow) on (the bank of) Sābhramatī, are pleased till the deluge. O goddess, there is no fear for those men who listen to this divine account called Rājakhaḍga. In the same way diseases and blemishes vanish by listening to and reciting it.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYSIX

The Greatness of Nanditīrtha

Pārvatī said:

1. Tell me which regions that Sābhramatī, having flowed out from Nandikuṇḍa, purified, and which holy places she, crossing the Arbuda mountain, brought about.

Sūta said:

2. When the goddess spoke this, Śiva, the lord of the universe, spoke (these) words to Pārvatī who fascinated the world.

Mahādeva said:

3-19. The sages first got fashioned the holy place called Kapālamocana, after the very purifying holy place Nandikuṇḍa. The holy place is more lustrous than all (others), and is extremely purifying. Here I had dropped the skull called *Kapāla*. Therefore, O Pārvatī, it became the holy place (called) *Kapālamocana*. It clearly purifies all the beings, and is well-

known in the world. That holy place, the lord of holy places, is called Kapālakuṇḍa, at which pure and auspicious holy place the noble ones (like) gods, so also nāgas, gandharvas, and kinnaras etc. live. The holy place is known in the three worlds and gives knowledge and salvation. Having bathed there and having purified oneself, one should fast for a night, worship Kapāleśa and feed brāhmaṇas. Even by giving (a piece of) cloth (to a brāhmaṇa) there, one would get the fruit of an Agnihotra. One who, at that holy place, has resorted to the vow of seeing (the lord), would certainly go to Śiva's heaven after having cast one's body. O chief goddess, formerly Saudāsa, on bathing at this holy place, was freed from (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder, and obtained knowledge. The very powerful Sudāsa was born in the family of Bhagīratha. His son Mitrasaha was also known as Saudāsa. Due to the curse of Vasiṣṭha Saudāsa obtained the body of a demon. After having bathed in Sābhramatī, he became free from the sin due to the curse. Here, at this holy place called Nandi, are always present the pure rivers giving religious merit like Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvarī and Sarasvatī. Learned men should especially make the gift of a cow, land, bed, daughter. A bath in Sābhramatī is said to be like this gift. Here even all the fallen are purified merely by means of the touch of the water. The dead ancestors of the man who, being greatly devoted, performs a śrāddha here, are pleased, and go to the highest position.

Those men who always listen to this divine account, are freed from all sins and would obtain absorption into Viṣṇu. For them who praise Maheśvara by means of their acts, mentally and by words, there is no grief till deluge.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYSEVEN

Vikīrṇatīrtha and Śvetodbhava

Mahādeva said:

1-14. The river Sābhramatī, (flowing) from the region of Nandi(tīrtha), came to the Vikīrṇa forest resorted to by brāhmaṇas and sages. Due to the great speed of her water and the resistance of the mountains she was divided into seven (streams) and flowed toward the southern sea. The first (stream) is the auspicious Sābhramatī. The second one is Setikā. The third auspicious one is Valkinī, and the fourth Hiraṇmayī. The fifth one, Hastimatī, is said to remove all sins. The sixth one, Vetravatī, was formerly fashioned by Vṛtra. This highly divine one moved (i.e. flowed) out from the pool of Vṛtra. So she became (i.e. came to be known as) Vetravatī, destroying great sins. The seventh one, Bhadramukhī purifying the world, is rich in auspiciousness. She, purifying those regions with these seven streams, has proceeded with the seven streams. He who offers a śrāddha at Vikīrṇa-tīrtha to the dead ancestors, gets that fruit which will be (i.e. is) the fruit of a bath at Gayā. Those who have violated their vows, who are fallen, who missed the piṇḍas with oblations of water, get freed when piṇḍas and water are offered to them at Vikīrṇa. He who would offer a śrāddha there, would certainly be one of Śiva's attendants. Therefore, one should devoutly offer a śrāddha there as is laid down in the three Vedas. "O brāhmaṇas, especially take a bath at this (place of) rise of the seven rivers, O best brāhmaṇas, longing for the world of sages." Kaśyapa especially spoke thus to brāhmaṇas. If a bath is taken here, it always removes all griefs. This holy place (Vikīrṇa) is best among holy places, is best among the best. This holy place Vikīrṇa gives auspiciousness and removes diseases and blemishes. Those men who especially always bathe here in the Kali age, become meritorious. There is no doubt about it. Vikīrṇatīrtha is very purifying like Gayā-tīrtha. It always gives religious merit to the dead ancestors, and destroys people's misery. Thus Vikīrṇa-tīrtha is described.

15-23. A holy place superior to this, and an excellent one, is called Śvetodbhava, wherefrom the river Śvetā has sprung up

due to the ash (applied) to my back and belly. She, the destroyer of all sins, is well-known in the three worlds. She has been produced due to the contact with the ash applied to Śiva's body; and is honoured by gods. A man who has bathed in it, has become pure and controlled, has lived there for three nights, is honoured in Rudra's world after seeing Mahākāleśvara. There is no doubt that the dead ancestors of him who offers (them) a piṇḍa with darbhas and sesamum-seeds on her bank, are very much gratified. Śvetagaṅgā is very auspicious, and frees one from misery and poverty by bathing in which, O goddess, great happiness is obtained. O Pārvatī I always stay at its confluence. The bath which men take here, and the gifts they give, would undoubtedly be for them infinitely fruitful. On the confluence at that place god Bhūteśvara certainly lives. Those best men who offer incense, lamp, flowers and wave lights are meritorious. He who, getting a bilva-leaf, offers it on (the Phallus of) Śiva, always obtains the desired object in the vicinity of Śiva on (the bank of) Śvetā.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Gaṇatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-15. One intent on a pilgrimage to holy places, should then go to Gaṇatīrtha. It is called Triviṣṭapa by Śiva's attendants and is on the bank of Candanā. A man bathing on the full-moon day at Triviṣṭapa, and being composed, is freed from (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa. No doubt should be entertained about this. He too, the noble and meritorious one, who stays at Triviṣṭapa during the four months of the rainy season, is also honoured in Rudra's world. A man, having bathed at Gaṇatīrtha and fasted on the Aṣṭamī (day), and having bathed at the confluence of Bakulā, goes to heaven. A man, having bathed at that holy place and having seen Bakuleśa, would obtain the position of the chief of Śiva's attendants due to the grace

of the lord of Śiva's attendants. A man hearing (about) this which is pure, very meritorious, increasing religious merit and (span of) life, obtains religious merit equal to (that obtained from) a bath in Gaṅgā. Having stayed here, a man, observing a fast, with his senses controlled and composed, who thus mutters the names of the charming lord of Śiva's attendants, obtains all pleasures. This is the truth and the (only) truth, O you of a beautiful face. (There was) the powerful king, Viśvadatta, of the lunar dynasty. He practised penance here for a long time, O chief goddess. Then due to Śrī Gaṇeśa's grace he obtained the position of the chief of Śiva's attendants. All the meritorious sages like Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Hoḍa, Kauśītaka, Bharadvāja. Aṅgiras, Viśvāmitra and Vāmana, everyday serve (the lord) due to Gaṇeśa's grace, O great goddess. A sonless man obtains sons, a poor man gets wealth, an ignorant man obtains knowledge, and a man desiring salvation would obtain salvation. O you beautiful lady, what is the use of repeatedly talking profusely about any other thing? He who would bathe here and offer worship, is freed from all sins, and goes to the highest position of Viṣṇu, (and reaches) Śiva of the form of Viṣṇu, and Viṣṇu of the form of Śiva. Due to Viṣṇu's grace, O goddess, I do not see any difference (between the two of us).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED THIRTYNINE

The Greatness of Agnipāleśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-19a. On the northern bank of Sābhramatī (the holy place called) Agnitīrtha is known. The holy place Tīrthapāleśvara is situated not far away in the north-eastern direction from her, where Caṇḍī has settled. That seat of the Yogamātṛs brings in complete welfare. There the great mothers have stayed with great effort and for favouring the world. A man of a firm vow, having stayed there for three nights, should go to that god Caṇḍikeśvara, the lord of gods. Having bathed in Sābhramatī

near Mātṛtīrtha, he being fully concentrated, should go to Mātṛmaṇḍala. A man obtains the fruit of the gift of a thousand cows after having bathed at Agnitīrtha and seen Cāmuṇḍā. For him there is no fear from demons, evil spirits and goblins. O chief goddess, at the place where river Gokhurā has joined Sābhramatī, there are thousands of holy places. O Pārvatī, there a srāddha should be offered with sesamum powder. (A man) having offered piṇḍas and fed brāhmaṇas, would obtain an undecaying position. There was a king Kukardama, who was most sinful, irresistible, wicked, foolish, who possessed ego, who censured brāhmaṇas, killed cows and children, who was most sinful and always indomitable. O chief goddess, when he was ruling in the city called Piṇḍāra, he died at an auspicious time. He who was dead, was born here as an evil spirit, O great goddess. He, of a yellow face, with his mouth parched up, having yellow hair, and harsh, very tall, having profuse hair, oppressed by hunger and thirst, subsisting on air, moved here and there. Accompanied by many evil spirits he wailed 'Hā, Hā'. The evil spirits near him also said: "What should be done?" Those other wicked evil spirits also crying and oppressed by hunger, thirst etc., came in contact with the king. With the king they moved to many uninhabited countries. On the way neither water nor food was ever seen (by them). Those evil spirits of wicked forms moved on the earth. They ate the flesh of corpses and always drank blood. King Kukardama was thus always surrounded by them. Some time by chance he went to the hermitage of (his) preceptor. He had done religious acts in the former existence. Due to that he came in contact (with the preceptor).

Pārvatī said:

19b-20. O master, O lord of the universe, tell (me) what religious deeds he did. This was a sinner, a wicked one, and troubled brāhmaṇas. How did he have good company. Tell it to me (though) difficult.

Mahādeva said:

21-29a. I shall tell (you) all that this king had done in the previous existence. Listen (to it), O daughter of the (Himālaya)

Mountain. O goddess, in his previous existence, he was a brāhmaṇa who recited the Vedas. Having everyday worshipped Mahādeva, and honoured guests, this best brāhmaṇa took his food. Due to the prowess of that religious merit, he became a king in the city of Piṇḍāra, and was known as Kukardama. Through his body and mind, he did not perform religious acts. Due to that (ill) luck, he died and became the king of the evil spirits. His face was dry, his figure was dry, his complexion was yellow, and he was fearful. O chief goddess, (the effect of) the religious deeds done in a former existence does not perish. Due to that religious merit he came in the company of the preceptor in the (latter's) hermitage. Kahoḍa lived there. He saw the king of the evil spirits, whose face was dry, figure was dry, complexion was yellow, and who was fearful. His eyes were deep, he was a great sinner, and was accompanied by wicked evil spirits. His hair was raised, he had matted hair, he was of the nature of death, and was fierce. Seeing him like that at that time, the brāhmaṇa (Kahoḍa) was afflicted.

Kahoḍa said:

29b-31. At this charming, very wonderful place, viz. at the holy place of Agnipāleśvara, I always live. O king, you are our patron. How have your become the king of the evil spirits? On this auspicious earth, due to the result of which deeds have you become a wicked one, of a wicked form, of the nature of death, and fierce?

The evil spirit said:

32-39. O brāhmaṇa, listen to the sin I committed in the previous existence. I was king Kukardama in the city called Piṇḍāraka O divine one, listen to what I, living there, did. Formerly, (I indulged in) killing brāhmaṇas, telling lies etc. I harassed my subjects, always killed beings. I harmed the cows, and destroyed brāhmaṇas' vows. O brāhmaṇa, I always remained without a bath. I hurt the good. I was always given to censuring Viṣṇu, and blamed the devotees of Viṣṇu. My conduct was bad, I was wicked, and was always accompanied by śūdra females. I ate anywhere, and was never intent on being pure. Due to that (evil) deed, O lord of brāhmaṇas, I died and reached

the stock of an evil spirit and have become unhappy in many ways. The preceptor alone is the kinsman, the preceptor, the mother, the father of him who does not have a mother, a father, relatives and kinsmen. Realising this, O brāhmaṇa, please relieve me.

Kahoḍa said:

40-46. Listen, O best king. I shall do as you tell me. You will instantly attain salvation. There is no doubt about it. Even the pre-eminent evil spirits who are in your company, will also get release, especially at this excellent holy ploce.

Then, O chief goddess, that brāhmaṇa, having gone to the holy place, made them perform rites like offering water with sesamum-seeds. There is no (restriction as to) month or date. Repeatedly going to a holy place, one should perform rites like a śrāddha as formerly told by Brahmā to me. O goddess, when the (śrāddha-)rite was performed at the chief holy place, they were released and seated in an aeroplane they went to my city. O chief goddess, bathing and giving gifts at the place where Gokhurā has joined Sābhramatī, would secure the fruit of a crore of sacrifices. Salvation is said to be obtained there, where there would be (i.e. is) the holy place Agnitīrtha called Kapāleśvara. It would certainly be true (and) true (only).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTY

Hiraṇyāsaṅgama Tīrtha

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-16. O goddess, I shall tell you about the great confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī). When that Sābhramatī Gaṅgā formerly had seven streams, then she—the daughter of Brahmā—was known as Saptasrotā. The seventh stream is known as Hiraṇyā. A sinful man having bathed at that holy place would obtain heaven. The mountain Satyavān is between Ṛkṣu and

Mañjuma. To its east is the auspicious confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī). Having bathed there and drunk (water) one would obtain an auspicious course. Having seen Nārāyaṇa Hari at Vanasthalī, one should then go to Hiraṇyāsaṅgameś-vara, a holy place, auspicious for celestial nymphs, where Urvaśī, (the most) beautiful among the celestial nymphs, was formerly born. There Nara and Nārāyaṇa practised excellent penance. At the charming and auspicious confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī), which removes great sins, all sages, with their sins gone, bathe. O goddess, the brāhmaṇas like Vasiṣṭha and like Vālakhilya, bathe there at the confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī). By bathing there one's form certainly becomes golden. A mortal always obtains that fruit (by bathing) at the confluence of Hiraṇyā (with Sābhramatī) which is equal to the fruit of the gift of a thousand cows. And at Hiraṇyāsaṅgama the fruit is said to be infinite times more than the one obtained at the time of lunar or solar eclipse at Daśāśvamedha. Hiraṇyākṣa was a great demon. He practised severe penance (here). His body formerly became like gold there. When king Janamejaya bathed at that place, his (sin due to the) murder of a brāhmaṇa vanished. The royal sage Viśvāmitra came here for a bath. Having especially bathed here he went to my city. O chief goddess, brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas and śūdras, who bathe here, go to Śiva's abode.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYONE

Madhurāditya

Mahādeva said:

1-11. O goddess, then I shall, after the description of Hiraṇyāsaṅgama, describe the holy place where the river Dharmavatī joins (Sābhramatī). There is no doubt that a fortunate man bathing there goes to heaven. He who sees there the holy place fashioned by Yama is meritorious. Those who perform a śrāddha there are free from the debt of their dead ancestors. Then

there is the Madhurā-tīrtha, which destroys all sins. One should bathe at Madhurā-tīrtha, and see Viṣṇu, the killer of Madhu. Here, Kṛṣṇa, full of the fear of Jarāsandha, had rested. After the murder of Kaṁsa demon had taken place, he, desirous of going to Kuśasthalī, lived for seven nights on the bank of Candanā, surrounded by Bhoja, Vṛṣṇi, Andhaka and Yādava heroes. He reached Madhurātīrtha and bathed as per rules. There Viṣṇu established (the image) by name Madhurāditya. He settled (there) eighteen thousand brāhmaṇas performing sacrifices, and left after giving them various vehicles. O chief goddess, there are thousands of holy places. One desiring the good of the dead ancestors, should perform a śrāddha there. "You who are staying in my holy place, should never be afraid of Jarāsandha." Having thus told those brāhmaṇas Kṛṣṇa went to Dvārakā. A man having bathed in that holy place, should worship Madhurārka. Due to the gift of a tawny cow on the seventh of the bright fortnight of Māgha, a man after enjoying pleasures here for a long time, would go to the position of the Sun.

12-23. O beautiful lady, listen, I shall tell you an ancient account, hearing which people are free from such sins as the murder of a brāhmaṇa. O goddess, on one occasion, the best sage Māṇḍavya practised very auspicious and severe penance at Gaṅgā-dvāra. He ate leaves and fruits and always ate (i.e. subsisted on) air. O goddess, day and night he was always greatly devoted to meditating on Viṣṇu. He was engaged in the practice of abstract meditation, and was always given to religious practices. O goddess, king Viśvamohana lived in that country. He had abundant wealth (consisting) of elephants, horses, chariots and foot-soldiers on the earth. His son, of auspicious marks, was Somacandra by name. O goddess, once he went for hunting in the forest. Having gone there, and having had the sports of hunting, he, surrended by his own people, amused himself. When he was engaged in sports, it was night, O goddess. During the night the king stayed in the forest for hunting. When the night passed, and when it was the period (of the day) called Brāhma, his horse was stolen by a wicked thief. Then there was a cry, 'Hā, hā' 'Where has the horse gone?' Then all of them desirous of going away and eager, through the fear of the king, said to

one another: "The horse is specially stolen by a thief." Looking for (it), they all came to Haridvāra. There the sage Māṇḍavya always practised penance. At that time the soldiers saw him lost in meditation: 'This thief, always a sinner, remains in meditation'.

24-32. Suspecting that he had come (there) after having tied the horse, the king's soldiers thought like that and seized the great sage They reported to the king about the thief, viz. the best sage. "O king, this snatcher of the horse is brought. O king, he is always a thief." Then he gave an order to transfix him on a stake. Then all the soldiers came together, and tied him. Then in a moment he was transfixed on a stake. He did not notice that act of being transfixed on a stake. Since he was engaged in abstract meditation and highly devoted to meditation on Viṣṇu, he noticed being transfixed on a stake after some time. "I am Māṇḍavya, the best of sages. Who has done this act?" The revered, omniscient one, who knew (the events of) the three times, thought: 'This must be the act of Dharma, and of none else'. Engaged in abstract meditation, the pious one went to Dharma. Having gone there, he spoke these (words): "O Dharma, listen now. You are always known as Dharma in the world and the Veda. How did you do the act of transfixing (me) on the stake? O sir, I certainly desire to know all that from you."

Dharma said:

33-39a. O best brāhmaṇa, listen to the cause of your fall in the previous existence. I shall tell (you) that. Please favour me. In your childhood you did this act—the sin—in your previous existence. O very wise one, listen to the cause of your fall in this existence. O brāhmaṇa, once you had gone to a solitary forest. O brāhmaṇa, having gone there, you put a living moth on a stake. Due to that act it was pained. O you of a good vow, due to that act, you were transfixed on a stake by the king. By all means (the effect of) an auspicious or inauspicious act done by one has to be undergone. You have undoubtedly suffered (the fruit of that) very small act. O best brāhmaṇa, be happy. Go at your will." Having heard these words, that best brāhmaṇa,

Māṇḍavya, with his eyes reddish due to anger then spoke (these words):

Māṇḍavya said:

39b-45. O most sinful one, O you of a bad conduct, what great sin had I committed, having done which, I was (thus) transfixed on a stake? Due to the wrath (contained) in my words, be a śūdra by all means.

After some time, he was born in the family called Candra, was known as Vidura, and was highly devoted to Viṣṇu. O chief goddess, for a pilgrimage he went to the river Sābhramatī, where there is (her) confluence with Dharmavatī. Vidura, of the form of Dharma, bathed there only. He certainly cast his śūdrahood in Dharmavatī. Therefore, O goddess, those meritorious men who bathe here, go to the highest position. Those men who offer a śrāddha and gifts here on the earth, get great prosperity in this world, and rejoice in heaven.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYTWO

Kambutīrtha and Kapitīrtha

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-6. A man having bathed at Kambu-tīrtha, and having offered oblations to his dead ancestors, should worship Anāmaya Viṣṇu. By giving various gifts to brāhmaṇas according to the precepts he obtains Viṣṇu's heaven due to the efficacy of this holy place. O beautiful lady, formerly the intelligent royal sage Viśvāmitra, desiring progeny, especially practised penance here. He ate (i.e. subsisted on) air, fasted, and had air as his food. He was always intent on Viṣṇu's worship and engrossed in meditation on Viṣṇu. Due to this penance he obtained progeny. A man who desiring progeny, goes to Kambutīrtha, always obtains progeny, O you of a beautiful face. This is the truth and the (only) truth.

This is the greatness of Kambutīrtha.

7-13. Then, O best goddess, a man should go to the holy place Kapīśvara by name, which, the destroyer of great sins, is near Raktasiṁha. Formerly, during the war between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, when the bridge was being built, the monkeys took the best mountain and particularly fashioned the excellent holy place, Kapīśvarāditya by name. Here a man, after bathing and offering oblations to his dead ancestors and seeing Kapīśvarāditya is freed from (the sin of) killing a brāhmaṇa. Especially on Aṣṭamī a man should bathe there. Hanūmat and others bathed there on three days. I have told you this efficacy of Kapitīrtha. There is no doubt that a man, having bathed here and having worshipped Kapīśvara, becomes handsome and very fortunate. A man who desires strength or piety or a son in the world, would obtain all (that) due to the efficacy of Kapitīrtha.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYTHREE

Ekadhāra and Saptadhārātīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. Then a man should go to the very purifying holy place (called) Ekadhāra. A man, having bathed at Ekadhāra and fasted for a night, and worshipping the master, the lord of gods, would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family. The bath here should be regarded as equal to (a bath in) Svāmitīrtha. Due to the efficacy of this holy place a man would go to Rudra's heaven. By bathing and drinking (water) here he goes to Brahmā's heaven. Those doing meritorious deeds in the three worlds, live on this bank. They do not have a fear that is due to the sword's edge etc. All that would quickly perish at this holy place Ekapradhāraka.

Thus is the description of the holy place Ekadhāra.

6-19. Then he should go to Saptadhāra, the best among sacred places, to which the sages have given the name Saptasārasvata. The great sage Maṅki made the Maṅkitīrtha in the Tretā age. In the Dvāpara age the sons of Pāṇḍu set up the Saptadhāra. The holy water that dropped from Śiva's matted hair had seven streams. All those seven auspicious forms of Gaṅgā which flow in the seven worlds are here in Saptadhāraka. The śrāddha offered at Saptadhāra gives satisfaction to the dead ancestors. O goddess, listen to an ancient account I shall tell, hearing which, O chief goddess, a man would certainly go to Brahmā's world. The son of Kaupītaka was well-known by the name Maṅki. He was always engaged in meditating upon Viṣṇu, and honoured Viṣṇu's men. He studied the Vedas, and was interested in maintaining sacred fire. In his house he had two wives: Sarūpā and Viśvarūpā. Seeing them childless he feared; worried as to what to do, he was very much thoughtful. 'Due to a son the family is stable. Otherwise the man would go to hell'. Thinking like this he never obtained pleasure. Then leaving his house, he went to the vicinity of his preceptor. "Salutation to you, O preceptor, who obliged gods. You are the lord of all the worlds, and protector of brāhmaṇas. You are the performer of sacrifices. O lord of brāhmaṇas, I salute you. O brāhmaṇa sage, I am sonless. O lord, what should I do? Tell me everything by which I shall certainly have a son. 'A sonless man does not at all get a good position in heaven. He should, by this or that means, beget a son'. Having remembered this statement I have come to you."

The preceptor said:

20-26. O best sage go there where the river Sābhramatī is. O best sage, having bathed there you will certainly obtain sons.

Having heard his words, and having saluted him (by prostrating himself) like a staff, the lord of brāhmaṇas went to Sābhramatī. The brāhmaṇa sage Maṅki, having gone there, then practised severe penance for fourteen years. There Maṅki, the teacher of Vedas, made in the Tretā age, a very wonderful holy place, O goddess. All that proved to be the giver of a son and as fulfilling his desires. Even till today there was or there will

not be a holy place like Maṅkitīrtha. That best brāhmaṇa Maṅki, having obtained sons comfortably, and having enjoyed pleasures of various kinds, went to my abode. This is a divine, pure, and very great account. By listening to it a man gets everything like sons and grandsons.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYFOUR

Brahmavallī and Khaṇḍatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-10. O chief goddess, a man should then go to the great holy place (called) Brahmavallī. O best goddess, listen to the actual nature of that holy place. That Brahmatīrtha where the water of Sābhramatī joins the water of Brahmavallī, is said to be equal to Prayāga. By offering piṇḍas there the dead ancestors are gratified for twelve years—as this is the statement of Brahmā. Knowing that the religious merit due to a śrāddha offered there is equal to that of a śrāddha at Gayā, men offer it, and the dead ancestors would (thereby) be pleased. A gift particularly at Brahmavallī has religious merit equal to that due to the gift of a cow, of land or of food also. Here only Sanaka and others having bathed according to the precept, obtained Viṣṇu's world by meditating upon the position of the highest Brahman. O chief goddess, a man obtains particularly that fruit at Brahmavallī which he obtains by going to Puṣkara, (bank of) Gaṅgā, and the holy place Amarakaṇṭaka. Men obtain that fruit at Brahmavallī which (they get when) they give gifts at the lunar or solar eclipse, O chief goddess. Those who have divine forms and hold conches, discs and maces, also go to heaven on bathing (here), O chief goddess. A man, holding a rosary made of Tulasī(-wood), and remembering Viṣṇu, goes to the divine Vaikuṇṭha, the highest position (full of) bliss.

Thus is the greatness of Brahmavallī-tīrtha.

11-12. From there a man should go to Vṛṣatīrtha well-

known as Khaṇḍatīrtha. Having formerly bathed there the cows went to Goloka. The cows, the mothers of the world, that had fallen due to a curse were protected by Dharma in the form of Khaṇḍa; therefore it is called Khaṇḍatīrtha.

Pārvatī said:

13. Who formerly gave a curse to the cows, the mothers of the world? How did they fall from (their) world? How were they protected by Dharma?

Mahādeva said:

14-29. Formerly Vṛṣa, playing with the mothers in Goloka, discharged feces and urine. That fell on the head of Hara. So, due to their fault Hara gave a curse: "O cows, losing your intellect, you will go to the earth." The cows cursed by the lord, again went to Hara, and requested the god: "May we obtain (i.e. go back to) our world." "When you will bathe in the pool called Khaṇḍa near Brahmavallī at the holy place on (the bank of) Sābhramatī, you will certainly obtain heaven." Then the cows having bathed with the lord of cows in the pool, (became) most pure (and) went to heaven near Mahādeva. A man having bathed in Gohrada, and having offered oblations to his dead ancestors, obtains Goloka free from heat and destruction The man, who, living there without food, offers piṇḍas to cows, would obtain happiness as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). There is no doubt that a man obtains that fruit at Khaṇḍatīrtha which he certainly gets by the gift of a crore of cows. Taking a bull's urine, one who drinks the holy water gets purified at that moment only. There is no doubt about it. There was not and there will not be a holy place superior to Khaṇḍatīrtha. Those men, O best goddess, who go there, are meritorious. Having gone there, a man should worship cows, O best goddess. Then having bathed and being composed he should worship Vṛṣabha. Undoubtedly by worshipping him he would live in Goloka for a long time. Those men who, having gone there, particularly offer a golden (image of a) cow enjoy happiness as long as the fourteen Indras (rule). A man, who having fashioned (golden images of) ten cows gives them to a

brāhmaṇa at Khaṇḍatīrtha—that is said (to give) infinite fruit, O best goddess. Having gone there the wise should plant a pippala tree. Having done so, O chief goddess, he goes to the world of the dead ancestors. Those who plant five āmalakī trees, enjoy happiness in this world and go to Viṣṇu's world.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYFIVE

Saṅgameśvara

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-16. Then (a man) should go to the great, excellent holy place called Saṅgameśvara, where the auspicious Hastimatī has joined Sābhramatī. Having received a curse from the sage Kauṇḍinya, the river became dry and came to be known in the world as Bahiścaryā. I shall describe to you that auspicious holy place, well-known in the world. It is auspicious, removes all sins, and is well-known in the three worlds. Having bathed at that holy place, and having seen Maheśvara, a man being free from all sins, goes to Rudra's heaven. O goddess, listen. I shall tell you the reason for this curse, due to which curse she became dry. At that place where that auspicious, great river Sābhramatī, named Gaṅgā (also) is, Hastimatī joined Gaṅgā. There the sage commenced a very severe penance. When so much time passed like this, the noble sage worshipped Nārāyaṇa Nirañjana (i.e. Viṣṇu). On her bank, O chief goddess, the sage particularly passed many years. O Pārvatī, sometime by chance the rainy season arrived. In course of time, O you of a good vow, the river was full (of water). Then at night the sage Kauṇḍinya abandoned that place. At night, he was very unhappy, and crying 'Hā, Hā', he wept piteously. Thinking what to do, he was very much anxious. The very divine hermitage with (i.e. occupied by) the sage, went (i.e. collapsed) into Sābhramatī, due to the flood, O best goddess. O beautiful lady, many fruits, roots, and even books, went (i.e. fell) into the river, due to the flood. That best sage Kauṇḍinya cursed the

river: "In the Kali-age you will be without water." Having thus given a curse to Hastimatī, O great goddess, the best brāhmaṇa went to the ancient heaven of Viṣṇu. Even today that holy place called Saṅgameśvara exists. Seeing that a sinner is freed from such sins as the murder of a brāhmaṇa.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYSIX

Rudramahālayaṭīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-8. O chief goddess, then a man should go to the holy place Rudramahālaya resembling Kedāra, and actually fashioned by Rudra. There he should offer a śrāddha causing delight to the dead ancestors. By offering a śrāddha there, the dead ancestors, along with the grandsires are gratified and go to the highest position of Rudra. He who lets loose a bull there in the great abode of Rudra on the full-moon day of Kārtika or Vaiśākha rejoices with Rudra. On drinking water at Kedāra, there is no rebirth. Having bathed here, a man undoubtedly enjoys liberation. O goddess, on one occasion, having left Kailāsa, I came to Sābhramatī, knowing her to be Gaṅgā for the well-being of the world. Having bathed there, and drunk (her water) and having made (the place) an excellent holy place, I then went to Kailāsa, my abode, O beautiful lady. Then the Mahālaya (the great abode) became a great holy place, and will be known in the world as Rudra-Mahālaya. Those who go to (i.e. visit) it on the full-moon day of Kārtika or Vaiśākha, do not have the misery due to the entire mundane existence.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYSEVEN

Khaḍgatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-7. O goddess, listen to (the description) of the holy place, difficult to be reached even by gods. It is called Khaḍgatīrtha, and it desrtoys all sins. A man, having bathed at Khaḍgatīrtha, and having seen Khaḍgeśvara Śiva, would not meet with misery, (but) goes to heaven; (so also he) who sees the god Khaḍgdhāreśvara. One should especially worship (the god) there on the full-moon day of Kārtika. O dear one, this god, the lord of the universe, the lord of all, always gives everything in the world. He gives the desired objects. A man who, desiring a kingdom, sees the lord in Vaiśākha, gets that object quickly due to the grace of Viśvanātha. He should especially worship him with flowers, incense, eatables, or lamps, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. So also with the offerings of fruits and bilva (-leaves). There is no doubt that wealth, grains, sons, grandsons, riches are obtained due to the worship of Śrī Viśveśvara.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYEIGHT

Mālārkatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-9. On the bank of Sābhramatī is the excellent Gayā-tīrtha, called Citrāṅgavadana, auspicious and occupied by Mālārka. It is adorned with kalpa trees, santāna trees, and mandāra trees, and with mango, nimba, kadamba, kāśmarī, aśvattha and tinduka trees. Even by remembering it from a yojana leprosy would be cured. Mālārka would remove the leprosy of him who suffers from it. That woman whose child is dead, or who is barren, who bathes there according to the Vedic precept, soon obtains a son. The muttering (of a hymn), a sacrifice, self-study, worship of a deity done (there) by the Sun's devotee would be inexhaustible.

O chief goddess, having gone to this place a man should observe the vow of Śrī Ravi. Having enjoyed pleasures here, he goes to the Sun's world. A royal sage whose child was dead, went there and practised penance. The king obtained a son due to the grace of Śrī Mālārka. He who, particularly observing a fast, and with his senses controlled, would worship Mālārka, would certainly enjoy salvation. O best goddess, brāhmaṇas led by Vasiṣṭha and gods like Indra always stay at Mālārka near the Sun.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTYNINE

Candaneśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-11. From this holy place Mālārka a man should come to Candaneśvara, an excellent place of joy near Mālārka. Having drunk the blood of Duśśāsana, the very mighty Bhīma, fulfilled his very fierce pledge fully, and he tied Draupadī's hair with his hands smeared with blood, and having given (gifts to) brāhmaṇas, he went on a pilgrimage. With his brothers he went to the charming bank of Sābhramatī. That candana tree which was brought to Sābhramatī from heaven, had become a Phallus due to the power of the auspicious holy place. A man, by bathing there and drinking (water there) and gratifying his dead ancestors would not go to hell (but) would obtain Rudra's heaven. Then having seen Candaneśa, the lord of the universe and the cause of the well-being of the worlds, he should worship him according to his capacity; having gone there he does not repent. King Kaivartaka, having many times worshipped (the lord) here, went to that Śiva's world having gone where one does not regret. The sages bathe here; the ancient god, the highest soul Viṣṇu, causing welfare, always actually stays here. This Sābhramatī is blessed. Blessed is the lord, the ruler of the universe. O Pārvatī, here many holy places have come up on the earth. Here is Āmardakī with auspicious fruits of many kinds. O beautiful lady, respectful offering should be made there.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTY

Jambūtīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-14. From there a man should go to Jambūtīrtha, the destroyer of sins, for a bath, which has become like a staircase in the Kali-age. Here formerly Jāmbavat established on Daśāṅga—the best mountain—Phallus Ṛkṣarājeśa, worshipped by hosts of gods. When formerly Rāma killed the demon Rāvaṇa, Jāmbavat proclaimed with the sounds of drums 'Rāmacandra has won; Rāvaṇa is killed in the war. Sītā is (re-)secured.' Having proclaimed like this, he bathed in the auspicious holy place. O chief goddess, with his own name he installed a Phallus there. A man having bathed there and instantly remembering Rāma with his younger brother is honoured in Rudra's heaven. O goddess, wherever Rāma is remembered, there freedom from the bondage of the worldly existence is noticed in the mobile and immobile (world). I should be known to be Rāma, and Rāma as Rudra only. Having realised like this, O goddess, no difference exists between (Rāma and me). In every age they who mentally mutter 'Rāma, Rāma, Rāma', obtain all objects. O goddess, I always remember Rāma, having heard (the name of) whom, there would never be rebirth. O goddess, living in Kāśī, I always remember the lotus-eyed Rāma with devotion and according to the sacred precept. Formerly Jāmbavat remembered that very handsome Rāma, and installed the lord of the worlds known as Jāmbavat. Having bathed, eaten and worshipped the deity there, a man obtains (and lives in) Śiva's heaven till the fourteen Indras (rule). Merely by bathing here a man obtains strength like that of Jāmbavat due to the grace of Śrī Viśveśvara. A man who having gone here, makes a gift of land, gets a thousandfold fruit on seeing Jāmbavateśa.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYONE

Dhavaleśvara

Mahādeva said:

1. A holy place superior to this is known as Indragrāma, having bathed where formerly Indra became free from a terrible sin.

Pārvatī said:

2. Due to which act did Indra acquire that terrible sin? How did he become free from that sin? Tell it (to me) in detail.

Mahādeva said:

3-19. Formerly Indra, the lord of gods, and Namuci, the lord of demons, mutually agreed to kill each other without a weapon. Due to being ordered by a divine voice, Indra took foam and killed Namuci. Then it was the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Indra asked Bṛhaspati the means of destroying the sin. And by the order of Bṛhaspati the lord of gods came to this place on the northern bank of Sābhramatī, and fashioned (there) a (holy) place. Due to his having bathed here he became free from the sin instantly. On his body was produced lustre white like the full moon. The killer of Vṛtra (i.e. Indra) installed the (representation of) the god (called) Dhavaleśvara. The Phallus is well-known in the world after Indra. When a śrāddha is offered on a full-moon day, a new-moon day, saṁkrānti (day), at an eclipse, the dead ancestors are satisfied for twelve years. He who, having reached Dhavaleśvara, would feed brāhmaṇas, for him, having fed one brāhmaṇa a thousand brāhmaṇas would be fed. A man should give (to a brāhmaṇa) gold, land, garments according to his capacity. A white milch-cow with a calf should be given to a brāhmaṇa. The muttering (of the names of) Rudra etc. which a brāhmaṇa would do after coming here, becomes a crorefold (in merit) due to Śrī Maheśa's grace. A man who would observe a fast etc. at this holy place, certainly is endowed with all his desired objects. There is no doubt about this. A man who, having brought bilva-leaves, worships the lord, obtains on the earth religious merit, worldly objects and sensual

pleasures. Dhavaleśvara will remove the disease and blemish of those best men who go (to this holy place) especially on a Monday. O goddess, I have not at all understood the greatness of those who especially offer worship to the lord on a Sunday. Those men who worship (the lord) here with a dūrvā, arka-flowers, white lotuses, (other) lotuses or petals, are meritorious. A man, having brought a flower of śvetārka and having worshipped Dhavaleśa, always gets his desired (object) by the grace of Dhavaleśa. In Kṛta (age) he was (called) Nīlakaṇṭha who always brought about the well-being (of his devotees). The revered lord was known as Hara in Tretā (age). In Dvāpara he was named Śarva, and Dhavaleśvara in Kali (age).

20-31. O chief goddess, listen to the old account in this regard. Formerly a vaiśya named Nandin lived in Indragrāma. Intent on meditating upon Śiva, he worshipped Śiva. There always stood in the penance grove, the Phallus called Dhavala. He to whom Śiva was dear, having got up everyday at dawn, was very much engrossed in worshipping Śiva. He was engaged in the worship (of the lord) with flowers according to the rite laid down in the holy texts. Once a greedy hunter, a killer of beings, a sinner of sinful acts, wandered on the bank of Sābhramatī, crowded with beasts of prey, and killed the deer with arrows. The hunter, the killer of beings, wandering like this, came, by chance, where the Phallus was well worshipped. He saw the Phallus—the well-known Dhavaleśvara, full of many wonders—well worshipped with many flowers and fruits. Having embraced the Phallus, he went to the bank of Sābhramatī. There he drank water and had his mouth full with water. With one hand he carried the flesh of deer, and in the other hand he carried bilva-leaves for worship. Quickly coming near the Phallus he struck with his foot the worship (offered by Nandin). All the flowers were scattered here and there. With the mouthful of water he bathed the Phallus. With one hand he offered the bilva-leaves for worship. With the other hand he offered the flesh of deer. With a salutation by prostrating himself he made a mental resolve.

32-48. 'From today I shall carefully offer worship. O Śaṅkara, from today you are my master, and I am your devotee.' Taking such a vow, the hunter came home. (When) in the morning

Nandin came to the temple, he saw all that the hunter had done. Seeing those misplaced (i.e. scattered) and impure things near Śiva, (and seeing) all those (things) disturbed by the wicked one, Nandin was anxious (thinking) 'what strange (thing) has today happened to me. Due to my ill-luck the obstacles that are told in the case of one who is engaged in Śiva-worship, have approached.' Having thus thought for a long time and having washed the Śiva-temple Nandin went home along the same way as he had come. Seeing Nandin dispirited, his family-priest said (these) words to him: "Why are you despondent?" Then to the family-priest Nandin said (these) words: "O brāhmaṇa, today I saw impurity near Śiva. I do not know who has done it there". Then the priest said (these) words to Nandin: "He who disturbed the worship of (i.e. offered with) flowers etc. is certainly a fool. He is dull-witted in what to do and what not. Therefore, O lord, you should not worry. In the morning go to the temple with me to catch the wicked one. I shall punish him." Hearing these words of the priest, Nandin remained at home at night with a pained mind. When the night Passed, he called the family-priest, and with the noble one Nandin went to the Śiva-temple. Having washed (the Phallus) he worshipped it with brāhmaṇas, covering it with many jewels and doing the five ways of homage. When Nandin was eulogising like this two watches passed. He (hunter), Great Death of that form and very strong, came there. He was of the form of death, very fierce, brave with a bow in his hand. Seeing him, Nandin being frightened, hid there. The family-priest also then bacame suddenly scared.

49-61. The hunter did there as before and without making any mistake he disturbed the worship with his foot and offered bilva-leaf. The hunter worshipped with the eatable of meat. Having fallen on the ground like a staff, he got up and went home. Seeing the great wonder, he (Nandin) thought for a long time along with the family-priest. Then he with his mind afflicted, asked the brāhmaṇas: "Tell the truth." All the brāhmaṇas together thought and spoke, according to the holy texts, to Nandin who had a fear: "Danger to the lord has come up. It is difficult to be warded off even by gods. Therefore, O best vaiśya, take the Phallus to your house." Agreeing to do so

Nandin uprooted the great (Phallus) of Śiva, brought it to his house and installed it in the proper manner. He fashioned a golden seat, well-adorned with fresh plantain-trees. With many offerings he worshipped (it). The next day the hunter came to the Śiva-temple. When he looked (for the Phallus) he did not see it. Breaking his silence he suddenly said these words with a wailing: "O Śambhu, where have you gone? Show yourself to me, today. If I do not get your sight I shall cast my despicable body today. O Śambhu, O Jagannātha, O Tripurāntaka, O Śaṅkara, O Rudra, O Mahādeva, show yourself (to me)." Having thus scolded Śiva with taunting (but) sweet words, the courageous hunter pierced, with a knife, his belly. Then having quickly pierced his arm he loudly and angrily said: "O Śambhu, show yourself (to me). Where will you go having abandoned me?"

62-70. With these words the hunter threw his intestines, and took out flesh from everywhere (i.e. every part of his body), and threw it suddenly with his hand into the pit (where the Phallus was). Having purified his heart, he plunged into Sābhramatī. Similarly having brought water and bilva-leaf, he quickly worshipped (the lord) properly, and fell on the ground like a staff. When the hunter remained in meditation near Śīva, then Rudra, surrounded by his attendants appeared there. He was fair like camphor, had braided and matted hair, and had the (crescent-moon) on his crest. Seizing him by his hand, and consoling him, Rudra said: "O brave one, O very wise one, O very intelligent one, you are my devotee. O devotee, ask for a boon which you have in your mind". Thus addressed by Rudra the very fierce (hunter) was full of joy. With great devotion he fell like a staff on the ground. Then he said to Rudra: "I do not ask for a boon. O Rudra, I am your servant, and you are my master. There is no doubt about this. Give this—the most praiseworthy (condition) in the world, in existence after existence. You are my mother, my father, my brother, my friend. You are my preceptor, a great hymn, always known through hymns."

71-78. Having heard the words of the hunter without (i.e. expressing) any desire, Śiva made him the chief of his attendants and his doorkeeper. Then the three worlds were resonant with the sound of small drums, so also with the sound of kettle-drums and of conches. Large drums then sounded, so also hundreds of

tabors sounded. Being amazed at hearing that sound Nandin quickly went to the penance-grove where Śiva was surrounded by his attendants. Then Nandin also saw the hunter, and the modest Nandī, full of amazement, said many words; he desired to praise the hunter with a great concentration: "You have brought here Śambhu; you are a devotee (of Śiva), and a tormentor of enemies. I who am your devotee, have come here. (Please) report me to Śaṅkara." Having heard those words of him, the hunter quickly held his hand and (with him) approached Śaṅkara. Revered Rudra laughed and said (these) words to the hunter: "Tell me who this one is, whom you have brought near the attendants."

The hunter said:

79-80. This is your devotee, so he is engaged in your worship. Everyday with gems, rubies and with diverse flowers, so also with his life and wealth you are undoubtedly worshipped. Therefore, O master, to whom your devotees are dear, know this to be Nandin.

Mahādeva said:

81-89. O you noble one, I know Nandin, living as a vaiśya. O very intelligent Mahākāla, you are my devotee and friend. Those best men who are not deceptive, whose mind is free from fraud—such distinguished devotees are dear to me.

Śambhu accepted the two as his attendants. Then there arrived many very bright aeroplanes. That very lustrous, excellent hunter emancipated the excellent vaiśya. The two reached Kailāsa-world in very speedy aeroplanes, and obtained absorption into the magnanimous god. Girijā (i.e. Pārvatī) waved lights before the two attendants as before her sons, and the goddess with a stately elephant-like gait laughed and spoke: "O Mahādeva, there is no doubt that they are (dear to me) as you are. You are identical, have same gait, similar laughter and well honoured." Hearing those words of the goddess, the hunter and the vaiśya also instantly turned away their faces, and in the presence of Śaṅkara the two attendants quickly

spoke: "O Śiva, you should pity both of us. We shall always stand at your door. We repeatedly salute you."

90-100. Lord Śiva, knowing their sincerity, spoke to them with great attachment: "May you get your desired object." Since then the two have become doorkeepers (of Śiva). O goddess, they remain at Śiva's door, and see him at mid-day. One is Nandin, (the other is the hunter) Mahākāla. The two are dear to Śiva. Those sinners, irreligious men, blind men, dumb men, crippled men, who are abandoned by their families, the wicked men, and men like cāṇḍālas, or men of whatever types, who have gone (back) after having worshipped Dhavaleśvara, will also go (to Śiva). No doubt should be raised in this case. A bath (taken) here, and a gift (given) here (lead to the) proximity of Śaṅkara. Those who have bathed in Sābhramatī and have worshipped Dhavaleśvara, go to Rudra's heaven. No doubt should be raised in this case. Those best men who bathe and give gifts here, enjoy moral merit, worldly prosperity and sensual pleasures and go to Śiva's abode. A man certainly obtains that fruit which he gets (by bathing etc.) on the day of the lunar or solar eclipse, and on the (death) anniversary day of his dead ancestor. The desire-yielding cow everyday comes there by all means. And having come (there) she Properly worships god Śiva. O best goddess, she undoubtedly goes to heaven. Due to the contact with that milk (of her), the Phallus is whitened. Since then its name has always come to be Dhavaleśvara. O goddess, the beings that die there being urged by Death, go to the position of Śiva (and stay there) as long as the moon and the sun (remain in the sky).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYTWO

Bālāpendratīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-11. On the bank of Sābhramatī is the holy place, best among the holy places, known as Bālāpa, which gives enjoy-

ment and salvation. The holy place is supported by ascetics and is the resort of the wise. There a maiden, of a very strong vow, practised a severe vow. She, the virtuous one, matchless in beauty on the earth, was the daughter of the sage Kaṇva, was an unmarried religious student named Bālāvatī. With many restraints the beautiful girl observed the vow of Sāvitrī with the resolve: 'The Sun should be my husband'. Devoutly observing those restraints very difficult to practise, she passed ten years on the bank of Sābhramatī. By that vow of her, penance, and devotion, the lord was pleased; and due to that abundance of her devotion, god Divākara (i.e. the Sun) came to the hermitage. The large-hearted one entered (the hermitage) after taking the form of a brāhmaṇa sage. Seeing the brāhmaṇa, the best due to his penance, the best among those who knew the Vedas, she honoured him in the manner of an anchorite. She, the auspicious devotee of the Sun, said to the ascetic: "O revered best sage, O lord, what is your order? I shall give you everything according to my capacity except my body. I am the Sun's devotee. I shall never give you my hand. O ascetic, by means of vows, restraints and austerities I have to propitiate the Sun, the lord of the three worlds."

12-23. When she spoke like this, Bhāskara, smiling and observing her who remained in the vow, spoke to her as it were consoling her: "O auspicious one, you are practising a severe vow, very difficult to practise. O maiden, your undertaking is as it should be. Everything is obtained by penance. Everything subsists in penance. O good one, by means of penance godhead, so also salvation, is obtained. O fortunate one, take these five badara-fruits from me." Giving her the badara-fruits, and telling her "Cook (these)" the Sun left. He, of a great glory, taking the form of a brāhmaṇa, left that auspicious one, and waited not far away at Indragrāma without being seen by her. The Sun desiring to know her devotion remained as a brāhmaṇa. Bhāskara (i.e. the Sun) fashioned a grove of badara trees. Then the restrained girl, with the palms of her hands joined, and free from fatigue, resorted to (i.e. took) fire to cook the badara fruits. O goddess, the great one, very lustrous, cooked the badara fruits. O chief goddess, very long time passed when she was cooking (them). A great heap of ash formed

there, and the day came to a close. A great heap of wood was burnt by the fire. With a desire to please the brāhmaṇa, she, after washing her feet, put them into the fire, looking charming, and burnt them for the badara(-fruits). O sinless one, again and again burning her feet, she held them up. Seeing that act of her, the Sun was pleased. Then he manifested his form to the maiden; and being very much pleased, he spoke to the girl of a severe vow:

The Sun said:

24-32. O girl, I am pleased with your devotion, penance and observance of the vow. Therefore, O girl, may your desired object be accomplished. Endowed with penance, you will stay in my abode at this holy place. This excellent holy place will be known by your name.

It is known as Bālāpa. It stands on the bank of Sābhramatī. It is well-known in the three worlds, and was formerly praised by brāhmaṇa sages. A pure man who stays at Bālātīrtha for three nights and having bathed at sunrise looks at the reddish Sun, goes to the Sun's heaven. No doubt should be raised in this matter. On a Sunday, or on a Saṅkrānti day, especially on the seventh, during the Sun's equinoctial passage, so also on the lunar and solar eclipse day, he should bathe and gratify gods, dead ancestors and grandsires. Then he should give a cow made of jaggery to brāhmaṇas, and rice mixed with jaggery. Those men who worship the reddish Sun with karavīra and japā flowers, live in the Sun's world. A man should give a red cow and a bull also. That man obtains the fruit of a sacrifice, and would not go to hell. A sick man is free from his disease, and a man that is bound becomes free from bondage. By offering piṇḍas at this holy place, grandsires are pleased.

Mahādeva said:

33-45. O ascetic lady, like this there is another greatness of this holy place. Listen to an old, great account, narrated by Vyāsa. Formerly there was an old buffalo disabled due to old age. He was unable to carry loads. (So) the trader abandoned him. In the summer he went to the great river to drink water.

Due to (ill) luck, he plunged into the mud and died. Due to the glory of this holy place his bones were washed away into the holy water. He became (after rebirth) the son of the king of Kānyakubja, and remembered his former birth. Remembering his own account, and the great glory of the holy place, he came (there), and after bathing (there), gave many gifts. He installed there (the representation of) Maheśvara, the god of gods. A man having bathed at this holy place, having worshipped Mahiṣeśvara, and having seen the red Sun, is freed from all sins. The water of Sābhramatī, which flows there from the east to the west, is holier than even that at Prayāga, is great, and fulfils all desires. The gifts given here to best brāhmaṇas, the oblations offered into fire here, the śrāddha offered here, and the muttering (of a hymn done) here would be inexhaustible. (By giving) the gift of a cow, land, sesamum seeds, gold, garments, grains, a bed, a seat, a vehicle, an umbrella, a man obtains whatever object he desires. Due to the grace of Śrī Maheśa and the glory of this holy place, this holy place Bālāpendra is auspicious, and always removes sins. Seeing it the sages are always free from attachment. There the holy place named Mahiṣa (and) Śveta gives great religious merit. O chief goddess, having bathed there a man is not reborn. O goddess, there is no doubt that a man gets that fruit (by bathing) at this holy place, which a man gets by bathing in Godāvarī.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYTHREE

Durdharṣeśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-6. I shall (now) describe another excellent holy place Durdharṣeśvara, by merely remembering which even a sinner would become meritorious. When the war between gods and demons had taken place, and when the demon had died, Uśanas (i.e. Śukra), the son of Bhārgava, had observed hẹre a vow difficult to practise, had propitiated Mahādeva, not easily

accessible and the cause of the world, and obtained the formula (called) Mṛtasañjīvanī (bringing the dead back to life) from Śiva, for the demons. It is well-known in the world. A man who has bathed at Kāyatīrtha and worshipped Maheśvara called Durdharṣeśvara, is freed from all sins. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, in this respect listen to an old account. Formerly when the battle between Vṛtra and Indra took place, the gods were vanquished by the demons. Indra, the lord of gods, thinking what to do, went to Bṛahaspati.

Indra said:

7-8. You are our preceptor. You are always actually the guardian of gods. You are famous, the best of sages. O treasure of kindness, favour me. I am vanquished by Vṛtra, O you of a good vow, where shall I go?

Bṛhaspati said:

9-12. O lord of gods, listen. I shall tell you (that) by which you (will) always (be) happy. If you desire your well-being, then do as I tell you. Go to Sābhramatī, and having gone there be happy. The god called Durdharṣa, causing well-being, always dwells there. O lord of gods, he gives desired objects. This is the truth and the truth only.

Having heard Bṛhaspati's words, he went to that river. Having bathed there, the lord of gods worshipped that Maheśa. Due to the bath and worship Śrī Maheśvara was pleased.

Mahādeva said:

13. I will always give every object that you desire.

Hearing (these) words, the lord of gods said (these) great (i.e. important) words:

Indra said:

14-15. You are the lord of all the worlds. You are the cause and the (highest) position. You are always perceived by me to be god Viśveśvara. O Viśveśvara, O master of gods, if you are pleased, then, O Mahādeva, kill Vṛtra. This is my great desire.

Mahādeva said:

16-17. O lord of gods, at your words, this Vṛtra is (i.e. will be) killed by me. O lord of gods, take the weapon which will be given by me. Due to its contact with (his) life, you will certainly kill him.

Indra said:

18. O lord of the universe, what is that missile with which I shall kill Vṛtra? What is that which you have fashioned as superior to the thunderbolt? When have you fashioned it?

Mahādeva said:

19-23. This is the Pāśupata missile which I have formerly fashioned. It was not given to anyone (else). O Indra, I have preserved it for you. O god, you have bathed here and worshipped (me) here. Therefore, take this weapon from me, with which you will kill Vṛtra.

Due to Śrī Maheśa's favour, Indra obtained it; and with that he killed the very mighty Vṛtra. All that took place here by the grace of Durdharṣeśa. That was secured merely by a bath and worship, O goddess. It was secured due to the glory of the holy place. O beautiful lady, this is the truth and the (only) truth. Realising this, O chief goddess, a man should bathe there. Seeing Mahādeva destroys all sins.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYFOUR

Khaḍgadhāreśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-5. On the bank of Sābhramatī is a very great purifying secret holy place. Known as Khaḍgadhāra, it will be concealed in the Kali age. A man who happens to bathe here and drinks water here occasionally, is freed from all sins and is honoured

in Rudra's heaven. Here that meritorious, auspicious Sābhramatī, following Kaśyapa, and going to the nether world, was held in his matted hair by Rudra. Rudra, with the name Khaḍgadhāra, dwells there only. O chief goddess, sinners having bathed here, have gone to heaven. In this case they narrate this old account about the very difficult vow practised by a mountaineer.

Pārvatī said:

6-7. What was the name of the mountaineer? Which vow did he practise? I desire to hear all that. Tell it to me properly. O best among speakers, there is none else but you. Therefore, O god, tell me all that (as) it is beneficial to hear.

Mahādeva said:

8-22. Formerly there was a very fearful, wicked (man) named Caṇḍa. He, the cruel one, was a rogue, was of a bad conduct, and fearful to beings. The wicked one constantly killed the fish with a net. He would cause to fall down deer, beasts, black antelopes and porcupines, so also many kinds of birds and pierce them with spear. The angry one killed birds and especially peacocks. The fowler was very sinful, wicked, and dear to wicked people. His wife was of that sort(only)—unchaste and suffering from severe diseases. When he was amusing himself like this, much time passed. Once the sinful one remained on a bilva tree at night with a bow in his hand to which an arrow was fixed to kill a boar. Thus he, without winking his eyes, passed the night. Even though he was angry, he cut off (i.e. plucked) many leaves of the bilva tree on the Caturdaśī of the bright half of Māgha, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. Those (leaves) fell on the Phallus that was at the root of that bilva tree through (his good) luck. All that became the worship of Śiva. By throwing mouthfuls (on the Phallus) the ignorant, wicked fowler gave it a grand bath. That wicked fowler became free from sins at the time of moonrise in the bright half of the month of Māgha. His impetuous wife devoid of hope and without food, also came near him—i.e. at the place where the fowler remained. He had not secured any hog, or deer or buffalo (as his hunt). So that woman had brought (for him)

food to eat. He saw his impetuous, cruel-eyed wife coming (to him). That wife of him fell into water—into a river. Just then she said to Caṇḍa: "Come on, eat quickly the flesh of fish that I have now brought for you. O fool, what did you do the previous day? Flesh is not seen by your side. You have ruined your family (as) it (will have to) fast (now)."

23-31. Having heard these words of Caṇḍā, he of a fierce form, had become one of a pure heart due to the Śivarātri-fast and keeping awake at night. He of a pure vow (went) to the river to bathe. When the wicked one was bathing, a dog came there. O chief goddess, the dog ate all that flesh there. Caṇḍā was very angry, and approached the dog to strike him. Then that angry Caṇḍā was warded off by Caṇḍa: "Do not hit him. What evil has he done?" She said: "This wicked one has eaten the food. O fool, what will you who are hungry, eat today?"

The mountaineer said:

I am pleased with (the fact) that the dog has eaten the food. What is the use of this transient and infirm body? O passionate woman, those who with full sincerity nourish their bodies, should be known as sinners, outcast from both the worlds. Therefore, giving up pride, passion and wickedness be composed by considering the truth; and be steady with the knowledge of the truth. O you beautiful lady, with the vow of Khaḍgadhāra I shall today abandon this my body. What is the use of my living long?

32-36. Saying so, when he drew his sword and (was about to) cut off his head, many attendants prompted by Śiva came (there). Many aeroplanes also came near him. The mountaineer having seen those aeroplanes and the attendants also, spoke with great devotion to them: "Why have all of you, wearing (rosaries of) rudrākṣa, come (here)? All of you resemble crystal; all of you have the crescent moon on your crests; all of you have braided and matted hair; you have your garments covered with hide; you have adorned yourselves with the necklaces of serpents' hoods. You are endowed with majesty. Your valour is like that of Rudra. O tell me the proper truth." The attendants of Rudra, asked at that time by the mountaineer, spoke:

The attendants said:

37-41. O Caṇḍa, we are sent by Śiva, the highest lord. Accompanied by your wife, come quickly, and get into the carriage. Due to the effect of the act, viz. your having worshipped the Phallus on Śivarātri, you have obtained the highest position.

Thus addressed by Vīrabhadra, he, laughing a little said: "What meritorious act have I, a sinful, foolish, wicked mountaineer, interested in hunting, done? I am always acting sinfully. How shall I live in heaven? Tell (me) how I have today worshipped the Phallus. I, having a great curiosity, am asking (you). Please tell (it to me)."

Vīrabhadra said:

42-47. O Caṇḍa, Mahādeva, god of gods, called Gaṅgādhara, lord of Umā, is today pleased with you and with your wife. Today you did what was proper for the occasion and worship also. While looking for a boar, O Caṇḍa, you plucked the bilva leaves; they fell on the top of the Phallus at that time. Therefore, O lord, you are meritorious. On the great (bilva-) tree you certainly kept awake. Due to that keeping awake the lord of the universe was pleased. Under the pretext of watching the boar, O glorious hunter, you observed a fast on the Śivarātri day, though by chance. Due to that fast and keeping awake the magnanimous best god was pleased. The very dignified giver of boons gives all boons to favour you.

48-53. Thus addressed by the intelligent Vīrabhadra, the mountaineer also got into an excellent aeroplane, while the attendants, deities and all beings were watching. At that time large drums, kettle drums and musical instruments sounded. There were the sounds of lutes, flutes, tabors, with dancing and acting. Chief gandharvas sang, and bands of celestial nymphs danced. He, being fanned with chowries, and with various umbrellas (held over his head), was taken with great ceremony near Śiva. Even the mountaineer reached (Śiva) due to a bath at a holy place and worshipping Śiva. Then what to say of those men who in this world offer flowers etc., fruits, sandal,

tāmbūla and sacred grains with faith and devotion to Śiva, the highest soul? They are Rudras. There is no doubt about this.

Mahādeva said:

54-57. Since then that holy place is well-known as Khaḍgadhāra. O chief goddess, in the Kali age, it will be hidden. O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, those who bathe (here) in the month of Māgha or Vaiśākha, and especially on the full-moon day of Kārtika, are released. Vasiṣṭha, Vāmadeva, Bharadvāja and Gautama come here to bathe and to see god (Śiva) the Trident-holder. The Phallus remained there in the (first) three ages. O Pārvatī, it does not remain (there) in the Kali age. At that time the sage Viśvāmitra had cursed me.

Pārvatī said:

58. I certainly desire to hear from you, O lord of gods, how that curse was pronounced upon you by the sage.

Mahādeva said:

59-72. O goddess, on one occasion the great ascetic Viśvāmitra came to this very wonderful sacred place, Khaḍgadhāra. Having bathed in the Sābhramatī, he paid me visit. Worshipping (me) in various ways he always remained there. O beautiful lady, there was at that time a very wicked hunter of a sinful form. He put flesh on (the Phallus of) Śiva. Seeing that flesh (there) again, Viśvāmitra then said: "Oh! the sinner has done a wicked deed. The highest soul, Śiva, has not punished him: Therefore, I shall, having determined, certainly curse him." Having thought like this, he then cursed me, O goddess. "In this terrible Kali age you will remain completely hidden." Having thus cursed me, that best sage left. Since then, O goddess, due to the sage's curse, I am hidden. If they especially offer a worship at my place, their sin perishes at that moment only. Those who having fashioned a clay image of me worship it, especially live at this place of (i.e. sacred to) me. In this Kali age it is called Khaḍgadhāreśvara. In Kṛta (age) it was (known as) Mandira; in Tretā (age) it was known as Gaurava. In Dvāpara (age) it was known as Viśva, and Khaḍgeśvara in

Kali (age). O chief goddess, my place lies on the southern side. Knowing this, a wise man, fashioning (my) image there, worships (it) everyday. He would obtain the desired fruit. The man obtains, on the earth, religious merit, worldly prosperity, sensual pleasures and (ultimately) salvation. O chief goddess, there would come no misery to those who offer incense, light, articles of food, so also sandal etc., to Maheśvara, the lord of the worlds; this is the truth, the (only) truth, O beautiful lady.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYFIVE

Dugdheśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-4. To the south of Khaḍgadhāra is a highly purifying holy place called Dugdheśvara, which destroys all sins. One who bathes and sees Śiva (called) Dugdheśvara at this holy place, gets instantly relieved of the pain due to sin. Dadhīci practised penance at the auspicious bank of Sābhramatī since it is meritorious as Candrabhāgā has joined Gaṅgā there. Everything like a bath, gifts, muttering (of hymns), worship and penance (done) there, becomes inexhaustible by the power of Dugdhatīrtha.

Pārvatī said:

5. O lord, I desire to hear about the origin of Dugheśvara. O lord of gods, tell (me about) the greatness of Dugdhatīrtha.

Mahādeva said:

6-26. Formerly in the war between gods and demons gods were defeated by demons. Intent on fleeing they came to Dadhīci's hermitage. Having abandoned their weapons there only, the gods went to the ten directions. Then having heard the uproar of the demons, Dadhīci Bhārgava, after having submerged the weapons in water, drank them. After (some) time the gods, eager to take the missiles, (came there) with Bṛhas-

pati. In the hermitage serpents sported with mongooses with pleasure. Seeing many such wonders in that hermitage, all the gods were very much amazed. At the place where the auspicious Sābhramatī has joined Candrabhāgā, they saw the excellent sage seated on a seat shining with great lustre like the sun, accompanied by fire and by his wife Suvarcā. All the excellent gods saw after salutation the best sage like Brahmā with Sāvitrī. Then the gods led by Bṛhaspati said: "It is already known in the three worlds that you are a donor. We have approached you with a request. All of us are full of fear. Please give us our missiles." The best, very intelligent sage, thus addressed, said to the gods: "O gods, submerging them with a hymn, I drank them (up)." Then the gods said to the brāhmaṇa: "To kill the demons quickly give your bones." The brāhmaṇa said, "(Here) they are given." Speaking like this to them he sent his wife to the hermitage. Then the delighted, very intelligent brāhmaṇa smiled and said to the gods: "O gods, I have drunk them. Take them (back) properly." Saying so, O goddess, the brāhmaṇa, proficient in abstract meditation resorted to it. Then with deceitful words the gods said to the smiling brāhmaṇa: "O brāhmaṇa, how can we get them as long as you are alive?" The brāhmaṇa sage laughed and said: "Wait for a moment. O gods, I myself shall abandon my body today." Speaking like this, O goddess, that brāhmaṇa, proficient in abstract meditation, resorted to it, and instantly went to heaven, whence he does not return even today. Then all the hosts of gods, seeing him dead, thought: 'How shall we cut up (his body)?' Then Indra called Surabhi and said to her: "By my words lick up the body of the best brāhmaṇa." Saying "all right" and honouring his words, she licked it at that moment only. The cow instantly made that body fleshless. Gods took those bones, and fashioned weapons (with them). The missile (made) from his backbone was Brahmaśiras.

27-40. Having fashioned weapons and missiles, the very powerful and brave gods, intent on destroying Vṛtra, quickly went (to him). Then Suvarcā, Dadhīca's wife, who was sent for the accomplishment of the mission of gods, having come (there) saw her dead husband and (his) body cut up. The chaste lady, knowing that entire deed of the gods, was angry. Then Suvarcā,

the very angry wife of the excellent sage, pronounced a curse: "O very wicked gods, you were cursed many times, and (yet) you are greedy. Therefore, may all of you with Indra, be childless from today." Thus she spoke. That female ascetic thus cursed the gods. Sitting at the root of the aśvattha tree, she stayed on the bank of Sābhramatī. That pregnant chaste lady cut off her belly. From her womb the child of noble Dadhīca came out. That great lord Pippalāda was actually the incarnation of Rudra. The mother Suvarcā laughed, and said (these) important words to the child Pippalāda: "Live near this aśvattha tree, O illustrious one, and be auspicious to all." Talking just like that to her son, that chaste lady Suvarcā went to her husband through profound meditation. Thus that wife of Dadhīca followed her husband to heaven. Those gods, having fashioned the weapons and missiles, who were very powerful and brave, who were led by Indra, and who were eager (to fight) came to the demons. The desire-yielding cow poured out milk at the place where the brāhmaṇa (Dadhīca) had perished. By the power of the sage the milk became of the form of a Phallus. O goddess, it is known as Dugdheśvara (situated) on the bank of Sābhramatī. Since then the holy place is well-known on the earth by that name. Its greatness is matchless, and destroys sins merely by being heard. Those men too, who devoutly listen to the (greatness of) Dugdheśvara, getting free from sins, go to the great position of Rudra.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYSIX

Candreśvara

Mahādeva said:

1-15. To the east of Dugdheśvara where the river named Candrabhāgā has joined (Sābhramatī), there is a highly purifying holy place. There god Candreśvara, always giving religious merit dwells. He is Śiva who is always all-pervading and who, the great one, gives happiness to people. Those who always

bathe and meditate here, would get the fruit of that due to worshipping Śiva on (the bank of) Sābhramatī. Soma (i.e. the Moon) practised penance here for a long time. Therefore, (the Phallus of) Maheśvara called Candreśvara was installed here. Śukra also practised penance near Candrabhāgā. Therefore, the holy place is superior to (other) holy places on the earth. O chief goddess, the Phallus fashioned by the sages is concealed in Kali(-age). Undoubtedly a golden Phallus is seen there. Those men who, coming here, bathe and drink (water) and worship Śiva, obtain religious merit and worldly prosperity. Those who especially do the act of giving a bull etc. enjoy (in) heaven, and then go to Śiva's abode. O goddess, those men who will everyday come for a bath near Candrabhāgā, should be known as meritorious. Those men who go to the other bank and worship Śiva, Śrī Hara, named Candreśvara who cuts off sins (are meritorious). Those best men who, having come here, especially do the muttering (in honour) of Rudra etc., should be known to be of the form of Śiva. O best goddess, those men who always bathe here, should be known to be Viṣṇu's forms. There is no doubt about this. Those who again offer here a śrāddha with sesamum-piṇḍa, also go to Viṣṇu's position due to the efficacy of the offering of the piṇḍa. Here gifts should be given and a bath should be taken according to the proper rite. Having bathed here men are absolved of (the sins) like killing a brāhmaṇa. Those who especially plant a fig-tree on this bank, go, after death, to Śiva's position (and stay there) as long as the Moon and the Sun (remain there in the sky).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYSEVEN

Pippalādatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. Near Dugdheśvara there is a charming, highly purifying, holy place, well-known in the world by the name of (i.e. after) Pippalāda. Formerly the sage desiring acquittal from

the debt of his father, the noble Dadhīca, practised penance here, and by the words (i.e. the order) of his mother, he produced a Kṛtyā[1] (i.e. a fearful female deity) resembling the submarine fire. A man having bathed and drunk (water) here, destroys (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Pippalāda, the lord of gods, is concealed on the bank of Sābhramatī. O goddess, by bathing there a man would enjoy salvation. The planting of fig trees should be done properly. Having done this, O great goddess, a man is free from the bondage of his deeds.

Pārvatī said:

6-7. Explain to me why that Kṛtyā was produced. O lord, tell me what that Kṛtyā did formerly. Which son brought her for the acquittance of the debt of his father?

Mahādeva said:

8-11. That excellent sage Dādhīca (i.e. Dadhīca's son) came (here) for (practising) penance. The great-souled sage practised a great (i.e. severe) penance here. A demon named Kolāsura came there to create an obstacle. He certainly caused many obstacles. That was noticed by his (i.e. Pippalāda's) good son, the intelligent Kahoḍa. O chief goddess, for the destruction (of the demon) he produced the Kṛtyā there. She killed the great demon named Kola. Therefore, O Pārvatī, the holy place is concealed in Kali(-age).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYEIGHT

Nimbārkadevatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-11. Next to Pippalāda is an excellent holy place called Picumandārka on the bank of Sābhramatī, destroying disease

1. Kṛtyā: A female deity to whom sacrifices are offered for destructive and magical purposes.

and bad odour. Formerly in the war with (the demon) Kolāhala, the demons vanquished gods. (Being) subtle, they entered trees with a desire for (saving) their life. There Śambhu remained in the bilva (tree), the immutable Viṣṇu in aśvattha, Indra in śirīṣa, and god Sun in nimba (tree). Thus the gods properly remained like that in the trees. Till the powerful Viṣṇu killed the demon Kolāhala, they remained resorting to the trees. The god that resorted to a particular tree, became one with it. Therefore, one should not destroy it. Thus due to the Sun's taking rest (here), Picumandārka is an excellent holy place which removes a disease after a man takes bath in it, and which is on the bank of Sābhramatī. After going there, if a man would especially worship the Sun, he gets the desired fruit by worshipping (him). Those men who after having gone there, recite the twelve names, are meritorious till they live. There is no doubt about this. An intelligent man who would recite these twelve names, viz. Āditya, Bhāskara, Bhānu, Ravi, Viśvaprakāśaka, Tīkṣṇāṁśu, Mārtaṇḍa, Sūrya and Prabhākara, so also Vibhāvasu, Sahasrākṣa and Pūṣan, obtains, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, wealth, sons and grandsons.

12-14. A brāhmaṇa who, resorting to (i.e. reciting) each name would worship (the Sun) on the earth, would be endowed with wealth and mastery of the Vedas for seven existences. A kṣatriya obtains a kingdom. A vaiśya would get wealth. A śūdra secures devotion. Therefore, a man should recite (this) great hymn. There never was, nor there will be, a holy place superior to Nimbārka; having bathed and drunk (water) here a man would certainly enjoy salvation.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FIFTYNINE

Koṭaratīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-13. A little away from it is the excellent Siddhakṣetra, O goddess. Formerly Aniruddha was chosen by Citralekhā for

Uṣā. He was taken to Bāṇāsura's city formerly and he stayed in his (i.e. Bāṇāsura's) house. Checked by nooses and arrows, he then remembered Koṭarākṣī. She is actually the power of Viṣṇu, always engaged in protecting (the devotees). Kṛṣṇa installed (the image of) this goddess here on the bank of the river. Due to the hymn of Aniruddha, returning to Dvārakā, after having vanquished Bāṇāsura in a battle, she actually came near (him). A man having carefully bathed for one year at that holy place, and having seen Koṭarākṣī's face, obtains much wealth. A man bathing at Siddha-tīrtha, and seeing (the goddess) living at Koṭara, is honoured in Rudra's heaven (after being taken) in a vehicle of (i.e. to which) lions (are yoked). O beautiful lady, even by remembering her, he too is freed. Therefore, those men who go here, enjoy salvation. A man, after having gone there, should especially bathe, and should deliberately recite the hymn of Koṭarākṣī, O Pārvatī. Koṭarākṣī has a universal form. She has great divine power. She is superior in strength. She in Tripurā, is the destroyer of Tripura; is Śiva and of the form of Śiva. She is said to be the daughter of Sarasvatī. She is Durgā. She removes misery. She is Bhairavī, Bhairavākṣī, and Lakṣmī, to whom the people (i.e. devotees) of the goddess are dear, O Chief goddess. Thus various names (of her) are mentioned. Those who recite them go near Śiva. O beautiful lady, those wise men who mutter the hymn composed by Aniruddha, get freed from troublesome bondage. This is the truth, and the (only) truth. The holy place fashioned by Koṭara on the earth is best among holy places. Merely on seeing it the heaps of sins (of a man) perish.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTY

Vāmanatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. A holy place superior to this holy place is well-known as Tīrtharāja. Here seven rivers with their water mixed with

sandal flow. A bath here is especially a hundred times superior (i.e. more meritorious) to one at any other holy place. Here, Vāmana (i.e. Viṣṇu), the greatest among gods, himself dwells. He who, on the Dvādaśī of the month of Māgha would give a cow made of sesamum, is free from all sins, and would emancipate a hundred (members) of his family. A devout man, who would give here even water mixed with sesamum-seeds to the dead ancestors, has (indeed) offered śrāddha for thousand years. The dead ancestors say this. If a man feeds brāhmaṇas at this holy place with jaggery (and) sweetened milk, then, when one brāhmaṇa is fed, a thousand would be fed (by him).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYONE

Somatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-7. A man (then) should go from there to Somatīrtha which is hidden on the bank of Sābhramatī. Bhava having come out from the nether world, became Kālāgni there. When a man bathes at Somatīrtha and sees Someśvara Śiva, he undoubtedly obtains the fruit of drinking Soma. The man becomes handsome, fortunate, enjoys (pleasures), is proficient in all sciences in this world, and would go to Śiva after death. O beautiful lady, in this matter I shall tell you an old account; listen to it; hearing it one is free from the sins like that of the murder of a brāhmaṇa. Sage Kauṣītaka especially practised a penance. He gave up food, and was very much engaged in eating leaves (only). Then he subsisted on air and was devoted to meditation on the self. Thus for many ages he practised severe penance there. Some time, fortunately (for him) Maheśvara was very much pleased. "O brāhmaṇa, I shall (give) you all that you ask for."

Kauṣītaka said:

8-11. O lord of gods, let a Phallus spring up here by your grace. Let there certainly be here the god called Someśvara,

Having bathed and eaten here, may a man obtain his desired fruit. If the best men especially mutter hymns of Rudra etc. at this place, they obtain religious virtue and worldly objects. A sonless man gets a son, and a poor man obtains wealth. One desiring a kingdom undoubtedly gets that kingdom. O lord, if you are pleased, give all that to me.

The lord said:

12-17. Then the lord of gods gave everything to the twice-born. Since then the holy place is well-known as Somaliṅga. Those who worship Sadāśiva with sandal or bilva-leaves, obtain happiness due to the birth of a son etc. in the human body (i.e. existence). Similarly, he who, on a Monday, goes to Śiva's temple, always gets his desired objects due to the grace of Somaliṅga. O goddess, having gone there, with whatever desire a man offers a fruit etc. all that desire is surely fulfilled. Those who worship god Śrī Maheśa, Pinākin with karavīra flowers or pārijāta flowers, obtain, O best goddess, the best position of Śiva.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYTWO

Kapotatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-7a. Thence, O goddess, one should go to Kāpotikatīrtha where the water of Sābhramatī flows to the east. That man who always offers a piṇḍa there, after dedicating it to his dead ancestors, and along with wild fruits and flowers on every parvan day, and who offers portions of food to the crows, dogs, etc., would very happily cross over Yama's path. A man having bathed at that sacred place with white mustard seeds on the full-moon day of Vaiśākha, should worship the excellent deity Prācīneśvara. He would emancipate himself, his dead ancestors and grandsires. Here a pigeon, having gladly offered himself to a guest, was praised by hosts of gods who had gone to heaven

in aeroplanes. Since then the holy place is known as Kāpota. Having bathed and drunk (water) there, a man removes (the sin of) the murder of a brāhmaṇa.

Pārvatī said:

7bc. O lord, tell me, how the pigeon offered his body. What was the cause? O lord of gods, I do not know (all this).

Mahādeva said:

8-18. O chief goddess, at this holy place there is a great fig tree. Its innumerable large branches are seen on the ground. Many beings lived there, so also birds. O chief goddess, a pigeon had built his house (i.e. nest) there. The lord of birds, always greatly devoted to Viṣṇu, verily lived along with his family on its branch. O goddess, once on the Dvādaśī day, the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, a hawk came there as a guest, O beautiful lady. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, he said: "O pigeon, give me the flesh of your body. Otherwise I shall curse you. To-day on the day of (i.e. sacred to) Viṣṇu, I, oppressed with hunger, have come (here). Therefore, O lord give the flesh to me who am afflicted with hunger." O goddess, the pigeon, a great devotee of Viṣṇu, having heard the words of the falcon, offered his body without hesitation. O best goddess, due to the power of the gift this place became a holy place called Kāpotaka, which is a great holy place and is the (most) purifying among the purifying places. O best goddess, a man who, having bathed here and worshipped Śiva, offers desired food to guests, enjoys happiness in this world and goes to the eternal (place) of Viṣṇu. The pigeon, having offered his body to the noble one went to the heaven of Viṣṇu (and will live there) as long as the Moon and the Sun (are there in the sky). Therefore, O goddess, having gone there, a man should always worship a guest. Having worshipped a guest there, he certainly obtains everything.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYTHREE

Gotīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. The best holy place among the holy places is the well-known Gotīrtha, destroying great sins and situated near Kāśyapa-pool. There is no doubt that whatever sins, like the murder of a brāhmaṇa, are there, they perish on bathing at Gotīrtha. Cows that had become dark due to some former sin, again became white on having bathed at that sacred place. Having bathed there, a man on offering grass etc. to cows, is free from the debt of Mātṛs by the grace of the cow-mothers. A man who, having gone to and bathed at Gotīrtha, gives a milch cow to chief brāhmaṇas, goes to the position of Brahmā.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYFOUR

Kaśyapatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-9. O chief goddess, here there was another holy place called Kaśyapa, where there was a great pool made by Nāgadeva. The god named Kuśeśvara shines there; so also there is a charming pool fashioned by Kaśyapa. O goddess, a man having bathed there would not go to hell. O great goddess, brāhmaṇas maintaining the holy fire and devoted to the daily recital of the Veda and very learned, live on (the bank of) Kāśyapā. As is Kāśī, so is this city built by sages. Kaśyapa practised severe penance here, and brought Gaṅgā springing from the matted hair of the lord. O goddess, that Gaṅgā is (called) Kāśyapī, destroying great sins, merely seeing which men are freed from a wicked sin. They recommend (here) the gift of a cow, so also the gift of a chariot. Having performed a śrāddha a man should, with effort, give a gift there. A holy place destroying a great sin like Kaśyapa was never there, nor will be there, in the

fearful Kali age. O chief goddess, all deities and sages with their sins vanished, always remain (here) by the grace of the chief of holy places.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYFIVE

Bhūtālaya, Ghaṭeśvara, and Vaidyanāṭha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. From there a man should go to the holy place Bhūtālaya which is a place removing sin. A fig tree called Bhūtālaya and (the river) Candanā (flowing) towards the east are there. A man who, having bathed at Bhūtālaya observes a fast on the Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī, and offers black sesamum, is not born as an evil spirit. He who offers a pitcher of water with sesamum, dedicating it to the dead ancestors, frees them from the state of an evil spirit. The man by uttering whose name a man bathes is freed from the state of an evil spirit. A man should bathe in the pure water at the holy place of Bhūtālaya and should see the fig tree called Bhūtālaya. By the grace of Bhūteśvara he would not have fear from evil spirits.

This is (the description of) Bhuteśvara-tīrtha.

6-8. A holy place superior to this is known as Ghaṭeśvara. Having bathed there and seen him, a man would surely enjoy salvation. There is that great holy place on the (bank of) Sābhramatī, (known as) Ghaṭa. Having seen Mahādeva there, a man is liberated. There is no doubt about it. The man who, having gone there, especially worships the fig tree, secures on the earth desires entertained by his mind.

This is (the description of) Gaṭeśevara-tīrtha.

9-10. Thence a man should devoutly go to the holy place well-known as Vaidyanātha. A man, having bathed at the holy

place and engaged in worshipping Śiva, and gratifying his dead ancestors, would obtain the fruit of all sacrifices. Vijaya, born from the god, and destroying all sins (is there), seeing whom a man always gets his desired objects.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYSIX

Pāṇḍurāryā-tīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-8. A greater holy place than Vaidyanātha, giving all kinds of supernormal powers and best of all holy places, is said to be excellent. Dharma's son, having powerfully taken a tax from Bibhīṣaṇa, the lord of demons, commenced the great sacrifice Rājasūya. When the southern quarter was conquered (i.e. regions of the south were conquered), Nakula, Pāṇḍu's son installed with great devotion Pāṇḍurāryā, giving enjoyment and salvation. A man, having bathed in the water of the Sābhramatī and having saluted Pāṇḍurāryā, obtains the eight superhuman (yogic) powers like the one of becoming as small as an atom[1] and great intelligence. No doubt should be raised in this case. If a man with a pure mind salutes Pāṇḍurāryā, it should be regarded by those who know the truth, to be a worship offered for a year. A man, having cast his body near Pāṇḍurāryā at that holy place, reaches the peak of Kailāsa and would be an attendant of Caṇḍeśvara. Formerly, Hanūmat practised there a very difficult penance. Due to the prowess of the holy place, the power to jump over the ocean was produced (in Hanūmat).

1. Aṇimā—One of the eight supehuman powers or siddhis. The eight powers are: (1) Aṇimā—The power of becoming as small as an atom. (2) Laghimā—The power of assuming excessive lightness at will. (3) Prāpti—The power of reaching anything e.g. touching the moon with a finger-tip. (4) Prākāmya—Irresistible will. (5) Mahiman—The power of increasing the size at will. (6) Īśitva—Superiority, greatness. (7) Vaśitva—The power of subduing passions. (8) Kāmāvasāyitva—Suppression of desires.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYSEVEN

Caṇḍeśa, Gaṇatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-2. The holy place superior to this holy place is known as Caṇḍeśa, where god Caṇḍeśa, giving prosperity, dwells perpetually. Having seen him a man is freed from the sin done through ignorance. All the deities coming together erected a city. O great goddess, it is known by the name Caṇḍeśa.

This (is the description of) Caṇḍeśa-tīrtha.

3-8. A holy place superior to this is Gāṇapatya well-known on the earth; it is fashioned near Sābhramatī (bank), O goddess. Having bathed there, O goddess, a man is released; there is no doubt about it. I think all the holy places on the earth including the ocean, abandoned (their places) and came to this verywonderful holy place for the good of the people. A man of a pure heart who has controlled his senses, performing a śrāddha there, obtains the fruit due to all sacrifices. Whatever is offered after dedicating it to the dead ancestors at the Gaṇa-tīrtha, all that is reqained quickly by the grace of the Lord of Gaṇas. A man, having bathed at the holy place, should give a bull to a brāhmaṇa; he, going beyond all the worlds, would go to the highest position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYEIGHT

Vārtraghnīsaṅgamatīrtha

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-4. Thence, O great goddess, a man should go where Vārtraghnī has joined Sābhramatī and where Śakra got a contact with that auspicious one. Men with their minds controlled bathe there. A man, bathing there, would obtain that fruit which

is that of ten horse-sacrifices. A man who performs a śrāddha there, (and offers) piṇḍas of powdered sesamum, purifies seven preceding and seven succeeding generations. A man after bathing at the confluence and worshipping Gaṇanāyaka, is not overcome by dangers, and is not abandoned by glory.

Pārvatī said:

5-6. Please tell (me), to commence which mission Indra had come to this world from heaven; so also what is the etymological explanation (of the name of) the river Vārtraghnī. Tell me also about the confluence which continuously makes the city of Indra full of the sound (made) by gods and brāhmaṇas.

Mahādeva said:

7-15. In this world, this question had come in old days. There was a great, righteous, well-known king Yudhiṣṭhira. He asked righteous Bhīṣma who was but knowledge incarnate. I shall tell you what he had said, O goddess. The thrilling war between Vṛtra and Indra took place for ten thousand and ten hundred years. Then, Indra who was defeated, entered into an agreement with Vṛtra and abandoned the proceeding, and sought my shelter, O innocent one. On the auspicious confluence of Vārtraghnī (with Sābhramatī), he pleased Śaṅkara (i.e. me), O goddess. I then appeared to him in the sky. From the ash that fell from my body on the bank of Kāśyapī, a Phallus named Bhasmagātra was fashioned. Brahmā has installed Bhūteśvara, Bhasmagātra. Merely by its sight, (the sin of) a brāhmaṇa's murder would perish. Having performed a śrāddha there (a man) gets freed from all sins in the (various) ages. Then I was very much pleased with the veay noble Indra. (I said to him:) "O god, I shall give you all that you desire. By means of this thunderbolt you will quickly kill Vṛtra."

Indra said:

16-20. O best god, in your very presence I shall kill the unconquerable son of Diti, by your grace.

Saying so, Indra went to (i.e. marched against) the demon. At that time drums sounded, especially in the army of gods. Tabors, small drums, kettle-drums, musical instruments (were sounded) in

many ways. All the demons had a great longing for existence. In a moment Indra became powerful. Seeing him intent (on killing Vṛtra) the sages and serpents praised Indra, the lord, with the praise: "Be victorious, be victorious." The form of that Indra going near (Vṛtra), desiring to fight, and being praised by the sages, was quite unbearable.

Mahādeva said:

21-37a. O goddess, hear from me the marks that suddenly appeared in Indra's body in the battle. He was fearful with his mouth blazing; there was great paleness; his body was much trembling; his breath became hot. There was severe horripilation; breathing was heavy. Very fearful meteors fell; and vultures, hawks, herons crying fearfully, came near him, and revolved like a wheel round him. Then that Indra, mounted upon an elephant, came there. Indra, with his hand holding the thunderbolt raised, approached the demon. That lord of gods gave out a superhuman cry. Indra dropped the thunderbolt on the demon Vṛtra who was exerting. The thunderbolt was great, very bright and resembled the destructive fire at the end of the world. Indra knocked down Vṛtra on the shore of the ocean. Then all around there was a great sound; Seeing Vṛtra fearful to all gods killed, a large shower of flowers fell on Indra's head. Then the lord, having killed the fearful lord of demons, being praised and accompanied by gods, entered his capital. Then from Vṛtra's body an excellent lustre came out. It was Brahmahatyā (i.e. the embodied form of the sin due to a brāhmaṇa's murder), that was very fierce, fearful and scaring the worlds. Her face was terribly deformed, black and tawny. She wore a string of skulls, was very emaciated, O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain. She was smeared with blood, most sinful, smelling like fish, and very dreadful. O great goddess, O best goddess, having moved out, she having a form like that and fearful, then looked for Indra. Running out, she, on seeing the very lustrous Indra seized him by his neck, and clung to it at that time. Confounded due to the fear caused by that Brahmahatyā he hid in a lotus-fibre, and remained there for many hosts of years. Seized by her, he became motionless, O goddess.

Indra tried to destroy her. (But), O great goddess, he was not able to destroy her.

37b-42. Due to being seized by her, Indra, reduced to an undesirable form, went to Brahmā, and worshipped him with his head (bent down). Knowing that Indra was seized due to the sin of the murder of an excellent brāhmaṇa (viz. Vṛtra), Brahmā then thought, O best goddess. She, thinking of Brahmā, approached Brahmā and spoke (these) words to him: "O revered god, O you who cut off the pride (of the arrogant), I have approached you. Please tell me what I should do, O god." "O young lady, release this king of gods. Do what is dear to me. Tell me, what I should do for you today. What desire do you have?"

Hatyā said:

43. O best man, by your words, I shall go away from Indra. O god of gods, salutation to you. Give me an abode. You, desiring the preservation of the worlds, have set this limit.

Mahādeva said:

44-45. Having promised that Hatyā like that, the grandsire thought of a means to remove Indra's sin due to a brāhmaṇa's murder. Then calling Fire, Brahmā spoke (these) words: "O Jātavedas, accept the fourth portion of (the sin due to) a brāhmaṇa's murder."

Agni (*Fire*) *said*:

46. O lord, what is the cause of my release, when this murder of a brāhmaṇa is done? I like to know this properly (from you), O you who are worshipped by the worlds.

Brahmā said:

47-53. Brahmahatyā will just then abandon you, and shall live in that man who, finding you blazing, does not offer into you seeds, herbs, sesamum-seeds, roots, sacred fuel and darbhas. O Havyavāha, let your mental torment go away.

Then Fire accepted it, and the revered grandsire obtained what was dear to him. O noble one, then having called trees,

herbs, grass the grandsire started speaking (words of) this import: Then the trees, herbs, grass somehow said: "All right." They, afflicted like Fire, spoke (these) words to Brahmā: "We being told about Brahmahatyā are naturally killed. Therefore, please do not kill us again. O god, we always suffer fire, cold, rain urged by wind, so also being cut and broken."

Brahmā said:

54. This (Brahmahatyā) will go after the man who will cut or break you without any reason.

Mahādeva said:

55-57. Then the noble, great herbs and grass said, 'Yes', and after worshipping Brahmā also, they went as they had come. O best one, then the grandsire, having called the celestial nymphs, and comforting them with sweet words said (to them): "O you excellent ladies, this Brahmahatyā has come from Vṛtra. Accept her fourth portion as told by me."

The celestial nymphs said:

58. O grandsire, the time of the release of us who, by your order, have decided to take (the fourth portion of Brahmahatyā), should be thought about.

The grandsire said:

59. She will quickly come to the man who copulates with women in their menses. Let your mental torment go away quickly.

Mahādeva said:

60-63. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, the bevies of the celestial nymphs, with their minds delighted, then said, "All right", went to their respective places, and rejoiced. Then the grandsire, the god—the author of the worlds—thought of waters, and they arrived. O goddess, all of them, having come to Brahmā, of unlimited lustre, and having saluted the grandsire, said (these) words: "O god, O you who curb your enemies, O lord of gods, here we have come by your order. So order us what to do."

Btahmā said:

64. This dreadful Brahmahatyā has come to Indra from Vṛtra. Accept the fourth portion of her.

The waters said:

65-66. O lord of the worlds, let it be as you say. You will please think about the time of our release. O lord of gods, you are the highest recourse of the entire world. Which favour from others can there be, that will emancipate us from peril?

Brahmā said:

67-68. She will quickly go to that man and stay in him only, who having a small mind, and with his intellect deluded, will throw phlegm, urine and feces into you. Then you will be liberated. I am telling you this truth.

Mahādeva said:

69-71 Then, O chief goddess, Brahmahatyā left the lord of gods, and went (away). The lord of gods became very much delighted due to the direction of the god (i.e. Brahmā). In the former age, Indra met (i.e. faced) Bramahatyā. Having practised penance here, and with his mind purified, he went to heaven. Then having performed a horse-sacrifice, he became sinless. O daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, such is (the importance of) Vārtraghnī at the holy place (on the bank) of Sābhramatī.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SIXTYNINE

Varāhatīrtha

Maheśa said:

1-6. Then the divine river after her confluence with Vārtraghnī, has entered with Bhadrā into the ocean, the abode of Varuṇa. The ocean also, having come there with a desire to do what is dear to her, and due to his affection for Sābhramatī,

brought about the pleasing union. Bhadrā who was the friend of Subhadrā formerly, actually taking the form of Śrī, helped her on the way. Their confluence on the northern shore of the ocean is meritorious. A man who, after bathing (there) offers pure water, after saluting Varāha, would obtain Varuṇa's place. Lord Viṣṇu entered the ocean along that path, vanquished all the demons, the enemies of gods, then the god, Yajñavarāha, agitated the ocean, sported there, for a very long time, and came out through Kardamāla.

Pārvatī said:

7. O god, tell me in detail the entry of Yajñavarāha into the Sābhramatī and his exit through Kardamāla.

Mahādeva said:

8-11. I shall tell you about this sport of Viṣṇu (in the incarnation of) Varāha, in the interior of the earth, done formerly. O daughter of the Himālaya Mountain, listen. He who is actually the lord, took up the form of a boar. Having taken up the form for the success of the mission of the gods, the lord of gods, holding the divine earth (on his tusks), came out of the place (called) Kardama. O beautiful lady, a great holy place has come about there. A man who bathes there, enjoys salvation. There is no doubt about this. A man should perform a śrāddha here for the release of his dead ancestors. Freed with them, he goes to the great world giving happiness.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY

Saṅgamatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-5. A holy place superior to this holy place is called Saṅgama. Here that Sābhramatī Gaṅgā has joined the ocean. A man should bathe and give gifts there. Having bathed here,

even those who are great sinners, get salvation. One desiring the good of his kinsmen, should offer a śrāddha there. When a śrāddha is performed here, the man would certainly live in the world of the dead ancestors. At that place where god Sāgara (i.e. the divine Ocean) always joins Gaṅgā, (even) the murderer of a brāhmaṇa is freed. Then what to say of other sinners? When dull-witted men do not know about the holy place there, then a holy place in my name should be fashioned.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYONE

Ādityatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-4. Near the confluence is a good holy place (Sattīrtha) well-known in the world, called Āditya. There was not and there will not be a holy place superior to it. One should visit it, and bathe. Worship should be done with a blue lotus, an arka flower and also with karavīras. Men should always perform a śrāddha and offer gifts there. This Ādityaka-tīrtha is pure and destroys sins. This holy place gives religious merit even to great sinners who visit it.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYTWO

Nīlakaṇṭha

Mahādeva said:

1-4. A holy place superior to that holy place is well known as Nīlakaṇṭha. One desiring salvation should always visit it. By (offering) bilva-leaves, incense, lamps and on seeing Nīlakaṇṭha a man gets the desired object. In a secluded place he

(i.e. the deity) highly devoted to fasting, always dwells. He gives to people whatever they long for. O great goddess, that Kāśyapī is well-known in Kali (age).

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYTHREE

Durgāsaṅgamatīrtha

Mahādeva said:

1-6. One should bathe there where that river Sābhramatī has joined Durgā and the ocean, O goddess. (Such men) become free from blemishes in this Kali age. There is no doubt about this. A man should perform a śrāddha at the confluence of Durgā. Having gone there, one should especially feed brāhmaṇas and offer (them) cows, buffaloes. This (river) is blessed, most blessed, pure and destroyer of sins, seeing which, O goddess, a man is freed from sins. This river Sābhramatī should be known as Gaṅgā. O goddess, in the Kali age she especially gives fruits for a long time. Even if there were hundreds of tongues in my mouth I shall not be able to describe her merits.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYFOUR

The Rise of Nṛsiṁha

Mahādeva said:

1-4. O goddess, listen to a vow difficult to be had in the three worlds, having heard about which men are free from sins like the murder of a brāhmaṇa. The becoming visible of the self-manifested one is for the happiness of the devotees. A day or a group of days has become meritorious. O goddess, he, by uttering whose name a man gets eternal salvation, is the highest

soul, and the cause of causes. He is the universal soul; has the form of the universe; the revered one is the lord of all. That Nṛsiṁha, the noble one, who has held twelve suns, has become manifest with a desire for the good of (his) devotees.

Pārvatī said:

5. O best god, innumerable incarnations are enumerated. O master, O lord of the universe, tell me about the greatest abode called Nṛsiṁha, by merely knowing which one would obtain a world (full) of happiness.

Mahādeva said:

6-7. Prahlāda, the best among the wise, spoke (these) words to the best one who had killed his father, and who, after killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, was seated comfortably, and on the lap of whom, the god of gods and the lord of world, Prahlāda was seated.

Prahlāda said:

8-9. Salutation to you, O revered Viṣṇu having the wonderful form of Nṛsiṁha. O greatest god, I am your devotee; and am really asking you. O lord, in me unbroken devotion is produced in many ways. Tell me, O lord, how (i.e. why) I have become dear to you. (Tell me) its cause.

Nṛsiṁha said:

10-13a. O very wise one, I shall tell it to you. Listen with a concentrated mind, the cause of your devotion and of your being dear (to me). In olden times you were born (as the son) of a brāhmaṇa. You did not study. You, Vasudeva by name, were addicted to prostitutes. Greedy for the company of prostitutes, you enjoyed honey and ghee, and did not do any good deed in that existence. Due to the power of my vow, devotion (for me) in you was produced, O sinless one.

Prahlāda said:

13b-14. O lord of gods, tell me in detail, what was the vow and of whose son? What bad deeds did I, addicted to a prostitute, do? Favouring me, now tell all that (to me).

Nṛsiṁha said:

15-27. Formerly Brahmā observed this excellent (vow) for the sake of creation. Due to the power of my vow he created the mobile and the immobile. God (Śiva) observed this vow for killing Tripura. Due to the power of this vow Tripura was knocked down. Many other ancient deities, sages, and very wise kings practised this excellent vow. Due to the efficacy of this vow all got success. They became dear to me. Having enjoyed many pleasures in heaven, they merged in me. O Prahlāda, enter me: since for (some) mission you had a form separate from my body. Even after hundreds of kalpas, they will not be reborn. A poor man obtains wealth like that of a rich man. One desiring an object will get it; one desiring a kingdom will obtain an excellent kingdom; one desiring a (long) life will get it (as long) as that of Śiva. It makes women free from widowhood; gives sons and prosperity. It brings about wealth, grains, and destroys grief. To those women or men who practise this excellent vow I give happiness, and the fruit of enjoyment and salvation. What is the use of talking much about the fruit of this vow? Neither I nor Śaṅkara is able to tell the fruit of my vow.

Prahlāda said:

O revered one, by your favour I have heard (about) this excellent vow; have heard about the fruit of this vow. Now I desire to hear about the cause of my devotion for you, and the excellent manner of this vow. O lord, in which month and on what day would it take place? O god, please tell it in detail, (tell also about) the manner, having performed in which, one would obtain its fruit.

Nṛsiṁha said:

28-33. O child Prahlāda, listen attentively to the vow. One should observe it on the Caturdaśī of the bright half of Vaiśākha. It should be observed with my manifestation, giving me pleasure. O son, listen to my becoming visible for the happiness of my devotees. For (some) other reason, this pure holy place, destroying sins and known as Maulistāna, came up in the

Western direction. In that holy place (lived) a well-known brāhmaṇa, master of the Vedas, Hārīta by name, and highly devoted to knowledge and meditation. O lord, his wife was very meritorious and always of virtuous nature. Her name was Lilāvatī and she was always under the control of her husband. O son, for a long time they practised a severe vow. Surely twenty-one yugas passed (while they were practising penance). Then at that holy place the lord appeared in person before the two.

Nṛsiṁha said:

34-46. O brāhmaṇa, I shall undoubtedly give you whatever you desire.

Then the two said to him: "If a boon is to be given to me, then let a son like you be (born) to me now only. "O son", I had then said, "I am certainly your son. But as I am eternal, I shall not remain in the womb. I am the Creator of all beings; I am actually the Supreme Spirit, and greater than the great; since I am eternal, I shall not stay in the womb." Then Hārīta said: "Let it certainly be so." Since then I have stayed at (this) holy place for my devotee. The best devotee, after coming here, should see me. I shall always destroy his entire suffering. And for this reason to those best men who observe this vow in the proper manner, there is no fear. A man who meditates on and worships him in a child's form especially along with the two, at night, would become Viṣṇu. He should always worship him, having four arms, large fangs, of the nature of Death, and unassailable, resembling a crore of suns, and unconquerable for a crore of Yamas; (he should always worship him who has a face like that of a lion, and has the body of a man, who is Nṛsiṁha, a divine lion, and of the nature of Death. Knowing this in particular, he would go to my place, and would observe the vow which is very pure, which gives a large mass of wealth, which undoubtedly gives the devotees salvation in the end, and which, being practised gives the fruit of a thousand Dvādaśī (vows). My vow should be observed on a Saturday when the Sun is in conjunction with the Svātī constellation,

when there is the siddhiyoga[1] of Planets and in a division of the day[2] (a karaṇa) known as Vaṇija. Knowing that this my day destroys crores of Hatyās, is associated with all auspicious conjunctions of stars, destroys sins (he should observe the vow). He who would pass my day (without the vow) is a sinner.

47-61. He who does not observe it goes to hell (and lives there) as long as the Moon and the Sun are (in the sky). When the day of (i.e. sacred to) me has arrived, O child, my devotee, after brushing his teeth and having subdued his senses, should (declare) before me the intention to observe this vow: "Today I shall practise your vow. Make it free from difficulties." He who observes the vow should not talk wicked words etc. Then at mid-day, with the accompaniment of a Vedic hymn, the wise one should bathe in pure water in a river etc., at home or in a natural pond or an auspicious lake. For the appeasement of all sins, he should bathe in the proper manner (after smearing his body) with clay, cowdung and dhātrī-fruit, so also with sesamum seeds. After putting on two auspicious garments, he should begin the daily rite. Then having smeared his house, he should draw an auspicious octagon. Having placed on it a pitcher with jewels, he should put on it a vessel full of rice. Then having fashioned, according to his (financial) capacity, my golden image along with that of Lakṣmī, he should install them there. Then having bathed them with (the collection of five sweet things called) pañcāmṛta[3], he should invite a brāhmaṇa preceptor, not very greedy, and knowing the holy texts; keeping him in front (i.e. in his presence) he should worship the deity. He should erect there a pavilion adorned with bunches of flowers. And with flowers of the season, I should be worshipped in the proper manner. Then I should be worshipped in the sixteen ways of doing homage to a deity, with hymns and restraints. Then I should be especially worshipped with the Purāṇic hymns. He who would then offer sandal with camphor, mixed with thick saffron and flowers of the seasons, so also Tulasī-leaves to Nṛsiṁha, becomes free. There is no

1. Siddhiyoga—A particular auspicious conjunction of Planets.
2. Karaṇa—A division of the day. These Karaṇas are eleven.
3. Pañcāmṛta—A collection of five sweet things used in worshipping deities. They are: milk, sugar, ghee, curd and honey.

doubt about this. He should offer incense of kṛṣṇa agaru, always dear to Viṣṇu, to the preceptor and to Viṣṇu for accomplishing all his desired objects. A great lamp, destroying the darkness of ignorance should be offered. Then he should wave the great light with the sound of bells. "O lord of Lakṣmī, I am offering you eatables, sugar along with articles of food and meal. Destroy all (my) sins." This is the hymn for offering of eatables:

62-73. "O Nṛsiṁha, Acyuta, Deveśa, on this auspicious day of your birth, I, giving up all enjoyments, will observe a fast. O lord, be pleased with that. Keep away (from me) a sinful existence." With the sounds of songs and musical instruments, he should keep awake during the night. Everyday a Purāṇa containing stories about Śrī Nṛsiṁha should be read. Then, in the morning after having bathed he should, gratifying me, worship me in the manner told before. With his mind steady, he should make an offering to Viṣṇu before me. Then gifts, to be told hereafter, should be given to worthy brāhmaṇas for winning (i.e. enjoying) both the worlds. The golden (image of) the deity pleases me. He (also) gives a cow, land, sesamum-seeds, gold etc. to a brāhmaṇa. A bed along with a mattress filled with cotton and with seven (kinds of) grains should be given. Other (articles) also should be given to his capacity. He should not indulge in dishonesty with regard to wealth, with the desire for the fruit as mentioned (before). Then he should feed brāhmaṇas, and give them good presents. Even the poor should observe (this vow) according to their capacity. All the castes are entitled to (observing) my vow. It should be especially observed by my devotees highly devoted to me. Then (follows) the hymn containing the prayer: "O lord of gods, emancipate from the painful ocean of the mundane existence those men who are born in my family and also those men who will be born therein. O you lord of the world lying on Śeṣa, give the support of your hand to me who am plunged in the ocean of sins, overcome by diseases and beings moving in water, and who am in a great misery. O lord of gods, by means of this vow, give me enjoyment and salvation."

74-97. Having thus appealed to the deity, and having dismissed the deity in the proper manner, he should offer all the

presents etc. to the preceptor. Having pleased the brāhmaṇas with presents etc. he should dismiss them. Engaged in meditation upon me, he should eat with his relatives. He who, though poor, certainly fasts (on) the Caturdaśī, certainly gets freed from sin committed during (the previous) seven existences. He who would devoutly listen to (the account of) this vow, would remove the sin (even) of the murder of a brāhmaṇa by merely hearing it. A man who would narrate this pure, great secret, would obtain all his desired objects. That is always the fruit of this vow. He who, according to his capacity, observes this vow at the time called madhyāhna (mid-day) and would, with great devotion, worship Līlāvatī along with the sage (Hārīta) and Śrī Nṛsiṁha also, would obtain eternal salvation. He who, having gone to that holy place, would worship Śrī Nṛsiṁha, obtains his desired fruit due to the grace of Śrī Nṛsiṁha. "O Śrī Nṛsiṁha, O you of a great form, O you unconquerable for a crore of Deaths, O Bhairaveśa, O Hara, O you destroyer of misery, O you of the form of a child, salutation to you. Salutation to Śrī Nṛsiṁha of the form of a child, and to the child, to the all-pervading, to Sunanda, to him manifesting his own form, of the nature of all beings, to the lord of all, of the nature of the heaven. Salutation to you, O ocean of pity, dwelling in the orb of the Sun, of the form of twenty-four, and of terrible fire at the time of the deluge, to Nṛsiṁha, fully of the form of the world. That god Nṛsiṁha, conqueror of Vīrabhadra, held the very much heated orbs of twelve Suns on his forhead." There is especially very auspicious and charming Sindhu river. O beautiful lady, near her even now there is a city, always known as Maulistāna, and fashioned by gods. There is the residence of the noble Hārīta. Līlāvatī also certainly stays there only. There would be an echo near the river Sindhu. But when Kali age has arrived, many sinful mlecchas certainly live there. If a man loudly utters the word 'Nṛsiṁha, Nṛsiṁha', like the word 'Nṛsiṁha' which, great and wonderful, came up at the time of the birth of Nṛsiṁha, then, O you daughter of the (Himālaya) Mountain, a similar echo is produced. Those men—a killer of a brāhmaṇa, one who has stolen gold, a drunkard, or one who has violated one's preceptor's bed (i.e. his wife)—after having gone to Sindhu, and bathed in her (water), are

undoubtedly liberated by the grace of Śrī Nṛsiṁha. Those men who stay there for ten nights, should be known to be of meritorious acts. (These) my words are not false. Those castes, led by brāhmaṇas, that stay there in the Kali age, should be known to be like the mlecchas, cast out of the fold of the Vedas by the best gods. They ate flesh there, and always drank liquor; therefore, they are certainly irreligious and most sinful. O chief goddess, like brāhmaṇas not performing sandhyā, they, outside the fold of the Vedas, live there in the West. Only one sacred place called Nṛsiṁha, is very extensive, having heard about which a man is undoubtedly free from sins.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYFIVE

The First Chapter of the Gītā: The Anecdote of Suśarman

Pārvatī said:

1-2. O revered one, O you knowing the entire truth, through your grace I have heard various duties about Viṣṇu, which are the causes of complete crossing (of the worldly existence). Now I also desire to hear the greatness of Gītā, having heard which devotion to Viṣṇu enhances. Now tell it, O god, if I am dear to you.

The lord said:

3-4. We worship great Viṣṇu, Acyuta, resembling the hemp-flower, having the lord of birds as his seat, and lying on the bed of Śeṣa. Once Lakṣmī, delighting the three worlds, respectfully asked (Viṣṇu) enemy of Mura, comfortably seated on a charming seat.

Lakṣmī said:

5. O revered one, with what purpose are you sleeping in the Milky Oceon—you, like one who is neutral, having instituted glory in the world is it were? (*obscure*).

The lord said:

6. Hearing these words, proud through knowledge, of Lakṣmī, the destroyer of Mura, with his eyes doubting and smiling, spoke with soft words.

The lord said:

7-13 O you of a beautiful face, I am not sleepy. With my sight turned inside and pursuing the truth, I see my own body of Śiva. O goddess, that which the contemplative saints see within with their sharp intellect, which produces a continuous mass of joy and which is without a second, is the immutable light, of the nature of the self, and unharmed, resorting to which the world subsists, and which is experienced by me, and without which there is no element in the world, mobile or immobile, and having secured which, Dvaipāyana (i.e. Vyāsa) produced the holy text of the Gītā; after having thought in many ways the very intelligent one churned the holy texts of the Vedas. O chief goddess, having resorted to it, a great joy, I, with my mind delighted, appear to be sleepy in the Milky Ocean.

Having heard these limited delightful words of the enemy of Mura, Lakṣmī, with her rolling eyes full of joy, was amazed.

Lakṣmī said:

14-20. O Hṛṣīkeśa, you alone are always to be meditated upon by the self-controlled ones. Therefore, I have a great curiosity to hear from you about that which is greater than you. O Acyuta, tell me if there is someone different from you who are the lord, the creator and the destroyer of the worlds.

The lord said:

O goddess, this my body is illusory and not real, and is augmented with the mass of the acts of creation, maintenance and withdrawal. O dear one, the nature of the soul is different from this. It is without duality and unity. It is free from existence and non-existence; and without beginning or end. It is pure consciousness, has acquired lustre, is beautiful due to great joy, is the form of lord, can be known only through the oneness of the soul, and is told in the Gītā.

Hearing these words of him of an unlimited lustre, she having doubt due to contradictory statement said: "If you are highest joy, and not known through speech and mind, then how does Gītā make you known. Remove this doubt of me."

The lord (Śīva) said:

21-26. Having heard the proper words of Lakṣmī, the lord told her the Gītā, the view leading one to the self, along with an old account. "O greatest goddess, I am the soul (looked at) in two ways as higher and lower. The higher is a (mere) witness, qulityless, partless and auspicious. The lower one, I am Pañcavaktra; it also remains in two forms. I, Maheśvara, the soul, am to be explained through the difference in words and meanings, as, through the words of the Gītā, my strong bond, of the nature of the objects in the mundane existence, is completely cut off; since (my two forms) Pañcavktra and Maheśvara, are dependent on its study." (*obscure*). Hearing these words of him, of the great ocean of the essence of Gītā, those afraid of the mundane existence know it through the difference between this and that. Lakṣmī asked this to him. He told her the entire greatness along with its account, remaining in major and minor parts. (*obscure*).

The lord (Viṣṇu) said:

27-31. O you beautiful lady, I shall tell you about my firm existence in the Gītā. The five faces are the five chapters in order. The (next) ten chapters are the arms; one is the belly, and the (remaining) two are the lotus-like feet. Thus the eighteen chapters are the divine forms of words. It, destroying great sins, should be known through knowledge only. Therefore, he, the very intelligent one, who studies a chapter, or half of it, or a verse or half a verse is liberated like Suśarman.

Lakṣmī said:

O lord, who was he named Suśarman? What caste did be belong to? How was his nature? Whence was he liberated? Due to which cause did his liberation take place?

The lord said:

32-47a. There was a wicked (man) named Suśarman, who was the limit of sinners (i.e. the worst sinner). He was born in the family of brāhmaṇas, who did cruel deeds, and had not realised the self. He did not meditate (upon the god), did not mutter (hymns), did not perform a sacrifice, did not honour his guests; but due to his possessing strength he indulged in sensual objects only. He was always engaged in husbandry, subsisted on leaves, loved liquor, ate flesh; for a very long time he passed his time like this. Desiring to fetch leaves, he moved into a sage's orchard. The dull-witted one was bitten there by a deadly serpent. Having died, and having gone to many hells, he came (i.e. was born) again and was born as a bull. A lame man bartered him for his subsistence. With a great difficulty, he, carrying him (i.e. the lame man) on his back, passed seven or eight autumns. He was maimed, his eyes rolled, and vomited foam continuously. He neither lived nor died due to his own acts. Some time the lame man made him revolve speedily. He suddenly fell on the ground and fainted. As this world is attracted by curiosity, in the crowd (around him) a meritorious man gave his religious merit to him. Some others also, remembering their own deeds, gave (him their religious merit). There was (in the crowd) a courtezan also, leading the course of the worldly life; and not knowing her religious merit, she gave (him) some religious merit. By the servants of Death he was taken to the city of the dead. He was released due to his being meritorious as a result of the religious merit given by the courtezan. Again he came to the earth and was born in the house of noble persons—brāhmaṇas. He remembered his (former) existence; after a long time he, desiring to know religious merit removing his ignorance, approached the courtezan, and proclaimed himself; he asked her. She told (him): "This parrot, living in the cage daily tells me. My heart was purified due to that, and I divided my religious merit." The parrot, asked by the two, started narrating an account that had formerly taken place, after remembering his former existence also.

The parrot said:

47b-55. Formerly I was a learned man, deluded by the pride of my learning. Due to my hatred for loveliness I was jealous even of virtuous persons. After (some) time, having departed from life, I then reached abhorred worlds. Then, I who very much censured (my) good preceptor, was born in the stock of a parrot. In the summer season, I, the wicked one, was also separated from my parents. In the summer, in which the roads were heated, I was brought by best sages and was dropped in a cage in the hermitage, the resort of the great. Hearing from the sons of the sages revising with great care the first chapter of the Gītā, I repeatedly recited it. In the meanwhile, a fowler indulging in stealing, snatched and sold me.

Thus the account was told.

The lord said:

This chapter was enunciated before. Due to that he dispelled his sin. With his heart purified by that the best bird was released. Thus talking to one another, and telling its greatness, they, the wise ones, constantly muttering it, obtained salvation in the house. Therefore, for him who recites or listens to the first chapter, or would remember or study it, the ocean of the mundane existence is not difficult to cross.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYSIX

The Second Chapter of the Gītā

The lord said:

1-17. The excellent account of the first chapter has been narrated. O Lakṣmī, also listen to the importance of the other chapters. In the southern direction, in the city called Purandara, (a city) of the teachers of sacred texts, there lived a rich man, well-known as Devaśarman. He honoured guests; he was a learned person; he was proficient in the Vedas and (other)

sacred texts; he offered hosts of sacrifices and was always dear to the ascetics. Offering oblations into fire, he pleased the gods for a long time. The religious-minded one did not obtain conclusive peace. Desiring beatitude, he everyday waited upon ascetics with truthful intentions, with not a few rites. When he was doing like this, and when a long time had elapsed, some Muktakarman formerly appeared on the earth. He had direct knowledge (of the supreme spirit); had no desire; had fixed his gaze on the tip of his nose; his mind was tranquil; he meditated on the highest Brahman; and was full of joy. The learned one, having held (i.e. touched) his feet with an humble mind, offered him reception due to a guest in the proper manner. Bowing to the ascetic, pleased with his pure disposition, he asked him about his final beatitude. The sage told him about a teacher, a goatherd, named Mitravat, (living) in the city named Saupura. He, having saluted his feet, went to the prosperous Saupura and saw a large forest in the region to its north. It was charming with the fragrance of many flowers tossed by the wind. It had filled the quarters with the sound of the humming of the intoxicated bees. In that forest on the bank of a river, he saw Mitravat with his eyes fixed and seated on a stone-slab. He was surrounded by animals which, though mutually hostile, had given up their natural hostility, in the garden, resplendent with slow breezes. He was as it were sprinkling nectar on the earth, with (his mind) full of pity and charming with the delight of destiny, when the herds of deer were peaceful. He, excited and with his mind pleased, and with his head slightly bent, politely approached him too and honoured him. Then the learned one, with his mind concentrated, remained by the side of Mitravat. He, being composed, asked him whose time of meditation was over.

Devaśarman said:

18. I desire to know myself. So, regarding this desire, please teach me the means that has secured success.

The lord said:

19a. Having thought for a while, that Mitravat also spoke like this:

Mitravat said:

19b-38. O learned one, know an old account being narrated by me. On the bank of Godāvarī, there was a city named Pratiṣṭhāna. There was (a man) Durdama by name (born) in the family of the learned. There was king Vikrama, being served (by people); everyday he accepted gifts, and (thus) fed his belly. Binding him with the noose of Death, Death took him to Yama's abode. Having experienced torments in all hells, he was born in a family of brāhmaṇas of a bad character. He was attended by learning (obtained) in the previous birth. He married a haughty girl from a mean family. In course of time, she abandoned childhood and entered youth. Her breasts were stout, buttocks fine, eyes perturbed with passion; she did not put up with her husband of a bad character; and loved other men as husbands. Desiring to earn her livelihood, she went out of the city. For a long time she was sexually united with a lustful man born as a cāṇḍāla. As a result of union with him she conceived, and a daughter was born. She was his wife only due to a former sinful attachment. The same, (getting) old, was born as a female imp. Due to bad company and attachment to bad women she became wicked-minded. Having an ardent desire for tasting blood she ate a diseased fowler. She roamed in the fearful forest, and was outcast by people, on seeing her. Having reached the world of the dead, the fowler became a tiger, due to the efficacy of the killing, after having stayed in fierce hells. She too, of a wicked mind, died in course of time. Having gone to dreadful hells, she was born as a female goat in my house. O learned one, I, not noticing a fearful tiger, as it were devouring everything, looked after her and others. Seeing him to have come, I, afraid of death, left the flock of the female goats, and ran (away) due to fear. The tiger, remembering former hostility came near. The female goat quickly went near him having plough-like fangs. She giving up her fear and abandoning her hostility, stood there unrestrained. The tiger too, free from hatred, was quiet. Seeing him like that, she started speaking: "O tiger, lift me up carefully and eat me as desired by you. You are not having this intention. How did you give up your hostile intention?" Hearing these words the tiger, free from

hatred, then spoke these words: "At this place my hatred has gone (away); my hunger and thirst have passed (away). Therefore, I do not long for you who have stood by me."

39-55. Thus addressed, she spoke again: "How did I become fearless? What do you know to be the cause of this? If (you know), please tell (it) to me". The tiger, thus addressed (by her), again spoke to the female goat: "I do not know it". Then they moved out to ask the great one who had gone ahead. The two having come to me, asked me who was much amazed. With the two I asked the lord of monkeys. The monkey, O brāhmaṇa, (on being) asked by me, respectfully said to him these words: "O goatherd, listen; about this I shall tell (you) an old account. See, this great abode was formerly in a forest. Here Druhiṇa had installed Śiva's Phallus. An itntelligent (person), Sukarman by name, practising penance, worshipped Śiva honoured by gods after having brought wild flowers. Having bathed (the Phallus) with the river-water, he lived there just by that deed (of worshipping Śiva). After a long time a guest came to him. Having fetched fruits, he offered them to him. Being pleased with that hospitality, he said to Sukarman: "What is the root of the act, enjoying the fruit of which you are staying here? Why do you just desire to live in the way of servile imitation?" He, thus addressed by the sage who was mostly pleased, spoke in reply clear words, most beneficial to himself: "O learned one, I really know the fruit of this act. Śambhu is served merely for the desire of enjoyment. The fruit—the result—of this service of Śiva is that you will favour me, knowing my desire." Having heard these true and pleasant words of him, the ascetic, being pleased, wrote the second chapter of the Gītā on the stone-slab and ordered the brāhmaṇa to recite and study it quickly: "Your desire will easily bear fruit everywhere." The intelligent one, speaking like this, disappeared (even) when he was watching. He, being amazed, constantly remained (reciting the Gītā) by his order. Then, after a long time, wherever the devout one, of a pleased mind, went, the penance grove became quiet. There was no antagonism, no hunger, no thirst, no fear due to the penance of him, muttering the second chapter.

Mitravat said:

56-62. Thus addressed by him, and having heard a great story, I, allowed by the pleased one, went with the female goat and the tiger. Having gone to the stone-slab I saw the chapter that is written (there). One should recite it. By its revision only, he reached the excellent, concluding limit of penance. O good one, therefore, you should everyday recite that chapter. Due to that your salvation will not be a remote occurrence.

Devaśarman was (thus) advised by Mitravat himself. Bowing down and honouring him, he went to the city of Purandara. Having met there in a temple certain wise man, he told him this account, and then recited this chapter. Taught by him, the pure-minded one carefully recited the second chapter and obtained the blameless, highest position. I have thus told you the account of the second chapter. Now listen, O Indirā, I shall tell you the importance of the third chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYSEVEN

The Story of Jaḍa: The Importance of the Third Chapter

The lord said:

1-11. A brāhmaṇa, named Jaḍa, of the family of Kauśika (living) in Janasthāna, abandoned the acts proper for his caste, and fixed his mind on living as a merchant. He was addicted to others' wives; he played with dice; he drank liquor; he was always engrossed in hunting. Thus he passed his time. When his wealth was exhausted, he started stealing. He seized the wealth of those who desired to perform sacrifices. For trading he went away and having secured musk, kṛṣṇāgaru (sandal), and chowries bright like the moonlight, brought them from (a place) at a distance of five or six yojanas. The next day he, having crossed a great distance, was overpowered by robbers when the sun was setting and darkness was spreading, and was quickly killed by them. Due to his loss of religious merit he

was born as a very fierce goblin. He was thirsty; he was oppressed by hunger; he licked the corners of his mouth; his hair was raised; he had big shanks; his mighty belly had sunk into his back. His body was one in which only bones were left. He very much turned his eyes wickedly. In the meanwhile, his son who was religious-minded and conversant with Vedas, very much guarded (piety) and desiring to see him, went (to look for him). Everyday he sought for news from the travellers, but did not get (any). Then, a man, his companion, arrived. Having learnt the account from him, he very much lamented for his father.

12-21a. Then the wise one, having thought, desiring to perform the obsequies, set out, with necessary materials, to go to Vārāṇasī. Having passed seven or eight nights on the way, he began offering the sandhyā prayer at the root of the tree where his father was killed. There he muttered the third chapter of the Gītā. Then a terrible sound was heard in the middle of the sky. He then saw his fierce father falling from the sky. With his mind overcome with wonder and fear, he saw before him in the sky, (his father) full of great lustre. With a concentrated mind he saw in the sky a divine aeroplane which was full of a crore of small bells and which had pervaded the quarters with its lustre. There he saw his father who had got into it and who was surrounded by divine damsels, who was being praised by sages and who had put on a yellow garment. Seeing him, he bowed down, and he (the father) blessed him. Then he asked him this account, and he too told it to him: "O son, due to the religious merit of my body, you, muttering (the third chapter of Gītā) near (me) have fortunately released me from the (effects of) acts, difficult to be abandoned. Then now desist from muttering, since that for which you did (the muttering after going) to Vārāṇasī, has come to you."

The lord said:

21b. Thus addressed, he said to his father, of a blazing lustre:

The son said:

22a. Advise me about my well-being. What else should I do?

The lord said:

22b-26a. Then the father said to the son: "O innocent one, do this. My brother has done the same act as I have done. He has gone to a terrible hell. Please release him (from there). My desire is: You should release others in my family who have gone to hell." Thus addressed, the son, with the palms of his hands joined, said: "Tell me, by (doing) which act I shall release them all." The father who was thus addressed, said to his son:

The father said:

26b-47. O son do that, by (doing) which I was liberated. Do that and give the religious merit springing from it. Then, they, giving up (i.e. free from) pangs like me, will soon go to that highest position of Viṣṇu.

The son, who was advised, said: "O father, if you like my words, I shall release all those denizens of hell." "Let it be so; may happiness come to you. A great dear thing has come up." Having thus directed his son, the father went to the highest position of Viṣṇu. He too, having returned from him, and having gone to Janasthāna, spent his time in the abode of the beautiful city of Śauri. For years he did what his father had told him. He gave the religious merit which he had got, and liberated the denizens of hell. In the meanwhile the servants of Viṣṇu, freeing the denizens of hell, going to the place of torture came there. He honoured them in various ways with acts of hospitality. Asked about their welfare, they spoke about complete happiness. Having thus honoured them, the wise lord of the world of dead ancestors asked them the reason of their arrival, and they told it to him: "O lord Yama, know that Śauri (i.e. Viṣṇu), lying on the bed of Śeṣa, has sent us to you to direct you. Through our mouth (i.e. through us) the god asks about your well-being. He directs (you) to release all the beings in hell." Having heard the order of Viṣṇu of unlimited lustre with his head bent down, having honoured it, he thought about something in his mind. Seeing all of them released and proud, he, followed by all of them, then went to Viṣṇu's abode. By an excellent vehicle he went where the Milky Ocean was.

Near it he saw the lord of the world, whose lustre was like many crores of suns that had risen, who was dark-blue like a blue lotus, whose lustre was mixed with that of the rays of the jewels on the hood of the serpent (Śeṣa) that was his bed, who was being seen with his mind full of joy and pleased, who was repeatedly and affectionately seen by Lakṣmī with glances full of devotion, who was served by meditating saints around him with the pupils of their eyes steady due to meditation, who was being praised by Indra in order to vanquish his antagonists, who, the heap of virtues, was being sung by words embodied, issued from the mouth of Brahman at the end of (the utterance of) the Vedic words, who was pleased and also neutral, who saw himself simultaneously with the mobile and the immobile in all beings in all stocks having their merit collected, who delighted himself with glances full of lustre, who had a body, all-pervading, and brightened by the lustre of the serpent (i.e. Śeṣa), who was dark-blue like the petal of a blue lotus or like the sky seen in the moonlight. Seeing him, he extolled him with many prayers.

Yama said:

48-60. O creator of all, salutation to (you) whose mind is pure, from whose mouths the Vedas were emitted, who are of a universal form, who are the creator. O you dreadful one due to the force of your strength, salutation to (you) Viṣṇu who destroyed the pride of the lord of demons; salutation to the excellence in preservation(?), and to the prop of the universe. Salutation to (you) who conquered the multitude of sins of all living beings, from whose eye on the forehead, that is slightly opened, lustre has sprung up. You are the lord, the soul of all the worlds and the great god. Therefore, having sent forth all devotees of Viṣṇu, you pity them. You pervade the entire world nourished by Māyā but you are not overcome by it by qualities born of it. Though you are within them, you are not overcome by the two (i.e. Māyā and its qualities). With your mind controlled, you rest within yourself in spite of your eyes turning to the objects of senses and moving towards the fruit. As you are limitless, your greatness also has no end. In this case silence alone is proper for me. How can you be the object of words?

Having praised him like this, he with the palms of his hands folded, said these words: "These vicious beings were fastened by me in pursuance of my duty. O lord of the world, order if I have to do some other piece of work." Thus respectfully addressed by him, Viṣṇu spoke, as if sprinkling (him) with nectar, with a voice deep like (the thundering of) the clouds: "I, acting as is proper for the occasion, emancipate people from sins. Having entrusted the responsibility to you, I am not sorry for the embodied beings. So do your duty. Go home." (Thus) spoke the lord. And speaking like this, the god vanished. He too came to his city. He too, having emancipated all those kinsmen of him living in various hells, himself went to Viṣṇu's heaven by an excellent vehicle.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYEIGHT

The Fourth Chapter : The Story of Two Girls

The lord said:

1. Now I shall tell (you) the greatness of the fourth (chapter) also. Listen (to it), due to which the two girls, giving up their condition as badari trees, went to heaven.

Lakṣmī said:

2-3. How did the two girls, giving up their state of being the badari trees, go to heaven? O god, who were they formerly? How did they attain prominence? I desire to hear this. O lord, please tell it. Hearing this great story I am not satisfied.

The lord said:

4-22. On the bank of the Bhāgīrathī there was a city (named) Vārāṇasī. A saint named Bharata lived there in the temple of Viśveśvara. Always absorbed in the soul, he muttered the fourth chapter carefully. Due to that study, the good one was not overcome by couples (of opposite qualities). Some

time, he, sporting, went out of the city. The ascetic saw gods who were nearby. Using one as a pillow and resting on the other with his foot, he took rest at the root of the two badari trees from which fruits fell. When the ascetic went from there, the couple of the badari trees became dry, leafless and branchless within five or six days. The two (trees) then were born somewhere in the house of brāhmaṇas. The pair, growing for seven years, (while) sporting saw an ascetic who had come from distant regions. Seizing his feet, they spoke words that were true and pleasant. "O sage, due to your favour only we two were liberated. Abandoning our condition as badari trees, we have obtained human birth." The sage, thus addressed by them, having forgotten (what he had done) replied: "O girls, when, and for what reason, were you liberated by me? I do not know the cause of your being reduced to the condition of badari (trees). (Please) tell it." The two girls told him the cause of their being the badari trees, and also of their liberation from that condition, difficult to give up. "On the bank of Godāvarī there is a holy place giving religious merit to men. It is known as Chinnapāpa and had reached great excellence. There (a man) named Satyatapas practised a very severe penance. In the severe summer he remained in the midst of blazing fires. In the rainy season his hair was continuously sprinkled with showers; in winter he remained in water having his body horripilated. The restrained one, always pure and practising penance in (every) season, deriving great joy, fixed his mind on the (highest) soul only. He bore great love for trees always bearing fruit and having thick shadows, and for beings free from jealousy. Even Brahmā himself everyday enquiring of him who was endowed with wisdom while aiming at the fruit of the penance, remained by his side. Due to lack of fear, that penance of him expressed in meditation upon Brahman who everyday approached him, increased. Then Indra, thinking that he was almost unseated from his prosperous position, and being afraid, put in a hundred obstacles. Calling us two, equal (to each other) from among the celestial nymphs, he ordered:

23-37. 'Create an obstacle in the penance practised by this one who, displacing me from my position, desires to enjoy (my) kingdom.' Having received this message, we two went from the

presence of Indra to Godāvarī where the sage stayed. Along with slender-bodied women, sweet and indistinct music was commenced there with deep-sounding tabors and sweet-sounding lutes. We had large buttocks, stout and large breasts, lotus-like smiling faces, and a little curly hair, shoulders on which jewelled rings were seen, eyes bright like lotuses. Our waists were slim, we had round thighs, our steps were even. Following tunes, rhythm and time, we danced; we showed our full gait conforming to the emotion. When we two danced the circle of the quarters (i.e. all the quarters) roared after first mildly starting and then increasing (the sound). Then due to the speed of the movement of our bodies there was a fragrant and very cold breeze. With the ends of our upper garments slightly blown, we manifested our breasts. Our excessive movement intensified (the passion of) love. It produced anger in the sage whose mind was unchanged. Then throwing water with his hand, he angrily cursed us: 'On the bank of Gaṅgā turn into badari-trees.' (We), being polite (said to him): 'Due to our being dependent, we acted badly. Pardon us for that behaviour.' (Thus) the sage was later propitiated. Then he, of a pious mind, brought about (our) freedom from the curse. The sage (said): 'It would last till the arrival of Bharata. You will be born among the mortals, and will have the recollection of former existences; on his having come near you, and on his remembering the fourth chapter (of the Gītā), you shall have acquittal.' We salute you, not only because you freed us from the curse but also from this dreadful worldly existence."

The lord said:

38. The sage thus addressed and honoured by them was pleased, and went as he had come. The two girls would always recite the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED SEVENTYNINE

The Fifth Chapter: The Story of Piṅgala

The lord said:

1-17a. O goddess, I shall now narrate in brief the importance of the fifth chapter, respected by the world. O dear one, listen attentively. There was a brāhmaṇa named Piṅgala, born in the city of Purukutsa in the Bhadra country. He was born in a pure family of brāhmaṇas, expounders of the Vedas. Having abandoned (the study of) holy texts proper for his family and the Vedas, he took to instrumental music, song, dance etc. and played upon a tabor etc. Having exerted himself in (mastering) singing, dancing and instrumental music, he obtained great fame and entered the king's house. (Thus) formerly he stayed with the king. He approached others' wives and enjoyed them with an undivided mind. Then he, puffed up with pride and unrestrained, always told him in private the weak points of others. His wife was Aruṇā by name, who was born in a mean family. She moving with a lover and looking for (paramours), took him to be a hindrance, and in her house at night she killed him by cutting off his head and buried him in the ground. Deprived of his life, he went to Yama's abode. Having lived in invincible hells, he was born as a vulture in a solitary forest. She too, casting her body due to fistula of the pudendum went to dreadful hells, and was born as a female parrot in that forest. The vulture remembering his former enmity, tore her wandering here and there with a desire to take grains, with his sharp talons. Then the vulture ran after the female parrot falling into a human skull, and he too was killed by bird-catchers. His wife (i.e. the female parrot) died there in the water in the human skull. The very cruel vulture having gone there, got drowned into that only. The two, taken by Yama's servants, went to the world of the manes. The two, entertaining fear, remembered the wicked deeds formerly done by them. Then Yama noticed their censurable deeds, and suddenly also noticed their great auspicious deed in bathing in it (i.e. in the human skull) and dying. Then he permitted the two to go to their

desired world; though their minds were unassailable, they were amazed at remembering their own sins.

17b-24. Approaching and bowing they said to Yama: "We have collected censurable sins before. (Then) what is the cause for our (going to the) desired worlds? (Please) tell it to us." Thus addressed by them, Yama then spoke these words to them: "On the bank of Gaṅgā there lived an excellent brāhmaṇa Baṭu by name. He was alone, without the feeling of mineness, tranquil, free from attachment and jealousy. He always repeated the fifth chapter of the Gītā. With his soul purified due to that religious merit, he, though a sinner, realised the eternal Brahman on hearing it after he cast his body. His soul, whose body was purified by the Gītā, was purified. Having reached that water in his skull, you two became pure. Therefore, you go to the worlds desired by you who are purified by the fifth chapter of the Gītā." Thus advised by him, the impartial one, they got into a divine car and went to the position of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY

The Sixth Chapter: The Story of Raikya

The lord said:

1-20. O you of an excellent face, I shall tell you the importance of the sixth chapter, hearing which men have salvation on hand. On the bank of Godāvarī there is a great city Pratiṣṭhāna where, O you of smiling eyes, I, named Pippaleśa, dwell. There swans remove the fatigue of the self-controlled ones with cold sprays from the cavities in their wings on the bank of Godāvarī. The Godāvarī-water made fragrant with the pollen from the cups of throbbing lotuses is praiseworthy as it makes people free from old age. Fie upon the nectar of the lord of herbs (i.e. the Moon), destroying sins! There the best sages touch the faces of the Mahārāṣṭra women bathing (in Godāvarī), misunderstanding them to be fully bloomed lotuses. There the sporting Mahārāṣṭra beauties snatch (by surpassing) the humming of the

bees the ascetics' minds also. There the Moon everyday wanes on seeing the face of a woman sporting on the top of a very high mansion. The sloping roof of a very high mansion is touched by sages and gandharvas with rays of great gems unsteady due to breezes (blowing) over dūrvā and sandal(?). In it the horses of the Sun's chariot when he is going, are free from fatigue due to the breezes from the banners that are tossed. In it the Malaya mountain appears to be left with stones, when the hosts of merchants collected innumerable (pieces of) sandal wood. In it even pearls are seen to be accumulated everywhere like the bunches of the laughter of the city-deity. There lived a king named Jñānaśruti. When he, of a strong lustre, lifted the earth like a gem, even Śeṣa, resembling the Sun in radiance, was (just) a snake in general (*obscure*). The desire-yielding trees were as it were darkened through shame on seeing his matchless generosity (manifested) by the continual smoke of the sacrifices. Gods greedy of eating the sacrificial oblations did not at all leave the city of Pratiṣṭhāna. Clouds, constantly well-nourished by the streams of water used for gifts and the moonlight of his valour and the smoke of sacrifices offered by him, showered in time. Calamities did not find even the smallest place anywhere. Right courses prevailed when he ruled the earth. He everyday looked upon wells, tanks and lakes as the treasures remaining in the heart of the earth. His palace shone with white banners, like the Himālaya mountain with the multitude of the ripples of Gaṅgā. The residents of heaven (i.e. the gods) pleased with his gifts, austerities, sacrifices, protection of his subjects, came (there) to give him a boon.

21-39. Then, tossing their masses of wings, divine female and male swans, white like lotus-stalks, went out along the path in the atmosphere. Two or three of them, led by Bhadrāśva, going quickly, and talking to one another, speedily moved ahead. All of them said together to them moving ahead speedily: "Why do you go speedily? Why do you remain ahead? Along this difficult path we should go together. Do you not see very clearly before you a mass of lustre, shining brightly of king Jñānaśruti, of a virtuous form? Hearing these words of those that lagged behind the swans that were ahead laughed and contemptuously uttered (these) words loudly: "Is the lustre of this

king Jñānaśruti more severe than the dreadful lustre of Raikya, the teacher of the Vedas?" King Jñānaśruti, comfortably seated on the top of his very lofty mansion, heard these words of the swans. Then, he, full of amazement, called his charioteer, and the noble one ordered him: "Bring Raikya". The charioteer, Maha by name, having understood (these) words of the king containing nectar, manifesting joy, went out to the city Vārāṇasī, giving salvation, where god Viśveśvara, the lord of the world and the preceptor dwells. Then to the holy place called Gayā where god Gadādhara, of blooming eyes, lives to emancipate all people. Then near Śiva. Having moved many times to all holy places he went to (the holy place) Kedāra destroying sins, seeing which (even) once mortals undoubtedly are released. Enjoying desired pleasures they are freed from great sins. Then he went to the Gauḍa country where Puruṣottama dwells, by just seeing whom men go to heaven. From there he went to the city of Dvārāvatī, giving salvation, where Kṛṣṇa, dear to Rukmiṇī, lived. A mortal, having bathed at the holy place of Gomatī and having seen the five Kṛṣṇas (there), obtains salvation after having enjoyed pleasures as desired. Then the wise one having reached the sea and seen Somanātha, the god giving enjoyments and salvation, proceeded further. He reached the city of Avantikā giving pleasures and salvation, where Mahākāla Śaṅkara dwells happily sporting with Umā. Then having reached Oṁkāra, giving happiness and granting enjoyment and salvation on the bank of Narmadā, he quickly set out from there.

40-52. Then he travelled to the city named Aśvamedhakara where Lakṣmī's lord Viṣṇu, holder of Śārṅga, actually lives. Then he reached in Viṣṇugayā a tank called Loṇāra, having bathed where and drunk (water of which) a man is released from bondage. Then he went to (a city) named Kolhāpura in Rudragayā, where revered Lakṣmī, giving (i.e. causing) devotion, dwells. A man having bathed in Pañcanadī and seen Lakṣmī, enjoys pleasures as desired, and also obtains devotion. Then having visited the city named Amalagiri, and having seen Somanātha who dwells after mounting on (i.e. on the top of) Nandikeśvara, who is auspicious, has four hands, and is ready to give gifts, he would undoubtedly have salvation. Then he saw, on the bank of

Tuṅgabhadrā, Harihara, whose arms fall on the globe of the earth in every yuga. All men seeing the charming Harihara-body, enjoy pleasures according to their desire and are freed from bondage. Having remained in heaven for a hundred kalpas and being free from the bondage of the worldly existence, they see the mighty lord of the worlds, seeing whom men never see hell. Having stayed in heaven for a hundred kalpas and being free from the desire for worldly existence, they obtain salvation. No doubt should be raised about this. Then a man should reach Śrīśaila resorted to by siddhas and gandharvas, where Girijā's lover (i.e. Śiva) called Mallinātha (lives) to draw out all people from the ocean of worldly existence. Having lived in heaven for a hundred kalpas and being free from the bondage of worldly existence, they obtain salvation. No doubt should be raised about this.

53-67. Then he reached Śrīśaila resorted to by siddhas and gandharvas, where Girijā's lover named Mallinātha (lives) to draw out all people from the ocean of this worldly existence and at every opportune time shows his own lustre. Afflictions and tortures in hell of those men who see or even remember him, keep away. There is no doubt that men free from the bondage of the mundane existence enjoy happiness in heaven and obtain salvation. Here Rāma with his younger brother and accompanied by Sītā (dwells). Having bathed and drunk (water) there a man is certainly free from hell. Men having enjoyed happiness in heaven for crores of kalpas, men freed from the path of worldly existence undoubtedly go to salvation. Then returning from there, he came, seeing on the bank of Bhīmarathī the two-armed god Viṭṭhala, giving enjoyments and salvation, (to the place) where the source of Godāvarī, the great Brahmagiri, is situated. By reaching Gautamālaya where the three-eyed Śiva dwells and after bathing and drinking (water) there where there is river Godāvarī between Aruṇa and Varuṇa, (sin due to) the murder of a brāhmaṇa perishes. Men, seeing Brahmagiri, rich in many holy places, obtain salvation only (after) being freed from the agony of the worldly existence. Then the charioteer, delighted by seeing holy places on both the banks of Gautamī, went to Mathurā, destroyer of sins. There gods and men worship the self-born god. It is the first great place of the lord, which gives

salvation. It is the birth-place of the lord of the three worlds, and is well-known to the Vedas and holy texts. It is resorted to by many hosts of gods and of brāhmaṇa sages. It is charming due to the bank of Kālindī; has the form and lustre of the crescent moon; being full of the residence of all holy places it is delightfully beautiful. It is known as Govardhanagiri, Dviṣadvana, and is covered by auspicious trees and creepers. It is very holy. It has the essence of the holy texts resting (there).

68-86. Then to the north he saw the city of Kāśmīra, after seeing on all sides the holy place Kururkṣetra, foremost in piety, where the lines of houses white like conches and touching the sky, have become as it were the fringes of the distinct laughter of Śiva. It is covered with golden pitchers of the garlands of devotion and grace which are as it were golden lotuses fallen from the divine river due to wind. There the banners of blue straps like rings of moss on the tops of mansions appear like the strings of pearls of the divine river. There, resorting to Kāśmīra, Sarasvatī always lives. Otherwise, how does she simultaneously write the (entire) Vedic literature? These swans that are dull due to intoxication, that have lotus-stalks in their beaks and that are the vehicles of Sarasvatī, resting there for a long time, are moving. There the swans sent by Brahmā to know a special art, shone like stars and went on all sides. The land-growing lotuses, pleasing to the touch by hand, are seen (to be used) by the enemy of the demons for the bed of the beautiful lady. There due to the statements (*upanyāsaiḥ*?) of the brāhmaṇas distinct hearing was not possible. Even a dumb man, fresh in talk, had a mass of joyous words (*obscure*). There the sky pervaded by the smoke of sacrifices, though washed by clouds, did not give up its darkness. There the place of the nectar dropped due to the great lustre of the sacrifices was seen to be distinguished by its mark. There boys resorting to the vicinity of the preceptor recite all arts by themselves due to the practice right from their birth. There the 'hum' sound of the bracelets of the brāhmaṇa wives and the humming of the wandering bees got confused. There the breeze touching again and again the cheeks of the brāhmaṇa wives, blows gently as it were through the fear of a curse. There, this god Śiva called Māṇikyeśvara, lives to give boons to men day by day. Maṇikeśa, having conquered kings,

worshipped and honoured him. Since then he took the name Māṇikyeśvara, as he was well worshipped with many majestic rubies by the Kāśmīra-king, desirous of conquest of the world. The charioteer saw at his door Raikya seated on a cart and enjoying shade and scratching his limbs. Having recognised him by the respective marks told by the king, the charioteer quickly bowed down to him and after having bowed down spoke to him.

The charioteer said:

87-98. O brāhmaṇa, in which (family are you born)? What is your name? You are constantly self-willed. Why are you resting here? What do you desire to do?

Hearing these words of him, he, full of great joy, remembered the charioteer, and said: "My desires are fulfilled. But there must be (something) as you, offering great adoration to me, are (trying to) know my mood." Taking (i.e. understanding) respectfully the intention of Raikya remaining in his mind, the charioteer slowly set out to the place where the king was. Then the charioteer with his arms folded and delighted to see his master, bowed down, and told the king the account as it took place. Then hearing his words, the king with his eyes smiling (i.e. blooming) with wonder, had a strong desire to honour Raikya. Taking a cart to which a pair of female mules was yoked, a necklace, silken garments and a thousand cows, he went to the Kāśmīra country where the meditating saint lived. Offering those (articles) to him, the king fell (prostrate) like a staff on the ground after bending with great devotion. Raikya was angry with the king. (He said:) "O bad king, O śūdra, do you not know my conduct? Take (back) this cart; lift it to which female mules are yoked; so also (take back) the garments, pearl-necklaces and the milch cows." The king, thus ordered, was afraid of Raikya. Then the king, afraid of a curse, devoutly seized the pair of his lotus-like feet, and himself said, "O brāhmaṇa, favour me."

The king said:

99. O revered one, wherefrom is this very wonderful greatness of you? Being pleased, O illustrious one, tell me accurately.

Raikya said:

100-104. O king, everyday I mutter the sixth chapter of the Gītā. Therefore, I have a heap of lustre, difficult to be borne even by gods.

Having carefully learnt from Raikya the sixth chapter of the Gītā, the wise king Jñānaśruti then suddenly became free. Raikya too, muttering near Māṇikyeśvara the sixth chapter giving salvation, obtained happiness. Gods also, who had come there, after having disguised themselves as swans for (getting) gifts, were amazed, and went out at their free will. There is no doubt that a man who constantly mutters this chapter only goes to Viṣṇu's position.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYONE

The Seventh Chatper: The Story of Śaṅkukarṇa

The lord said:

1-20. I shall tell you the greatness of the seventh chapter, having heard which the ears are filled with a flood of nectar. There was a city Pāṭaliputra by name, difficult of access, having high town-gates. A brāhmaṇa Śaṅkukarṇa Dayārṇava by name lived in it. Resorting to the profession of a vaiśya he earned much wealth. He did not gratify manes, did not worship gods. Intent on earning wealth, he fed kings. Once for auspiciousness, the fourth marriage started in another house along with his sons and kinsmen(?). On a night fit for religious acts a serpent having come from somewhere bit the forearm of him who was asleep. He who was just bitten, could not be cured with gems, spells or herbs, and in a few moments died. Covering his body with nimba leaves and stalks and putting it on a large bough of a tree the sons came home. Then after a long time he was born as a serpent. With his mind fixed on the desires (of the former birth), he remembered his former birth. He had thought: 'Having deceived these sons, I shall cover (i.e. bury) this wealth, a crore in amount, where my (other) wealth is placed.' Then, full

of great faith, the sons of the brāhmaṇa made an offering to Nārāyaṇa. Once, the father, troubled by the birth as a serpent, came in the dream of his sons, and told them his intention. Then they, greatly deluded by amazement got up in the morning, and being unrestrained, told each other the account. One of them, due to his love for his father, desired to emancipate him. The other son through greed for the wealth, desired to kill the serpent. The other (i.e. the third) son, with his mind fascinated by the affection for his father, (thought:) 'Maybe he is (turned) into a serpent'. Thinking like this, he simply lamented. But the middle son, deceiving his two brothers, got up under some pretext and went to his own house. Then he gently called his virtuous wife. With a spade in his hand he went where his father (turned into) a serpent was. He who was not told about (the place of) the wealth, decided accurately about it through (certain) marks. Through greed, he came to that place to strike (down) the anthill. He made his wife take out the earth, and he himself dug the ground. From the anthill that was being dug, a very fierce serpent came out. Then the serpent with mouthfuls of poison and hissing, told him (these) words:

The serpent said:

21. Who are you? Why have you come (here)? Why are you digging the hole? O, fool, who has sent you? Tell that to me.

The son said:

22. I am your son, named Śiva. I have a strong desire to take gold. Being very much amazed by the dream I had at night, I have come (here).

Śiva said*:

23. Having heard these words of the son, censured by the world, the serpent, laughing loudly, started speaking clearly:

The serpent said:

24. If you are (my) son, quickly free me who am born as a serpent for (the preservation of) the deposit of the former birth, from bondage.

---

*I.e. Lord Śiva.

The son said:

25. O father, tell me how you can be freed, since leaving the entire world, I have come (here) at night.

The father said:

26-34. O son, except the seventh chapter of the Gītā, which is full of nectar, and which is the cause of the removal of the old age, death and agony of a living being, the holy places, gifts, austerities, sacrifices are not at all capable of releasing me. O son, feed devoutly a brāhmaṇa studying the seventh chapter on the day of a śrāddha offered to me. Due to that I shall be undoubtedly released. O son, also feed other brāhmaṇas proficient in the Vedic learning according to your capacity and with great devotion.

Having heard these words of the father turned into a serpent, all the sons did as he had told (them, and even) more than that. Then that wealthy Śaṅkukarṇa, having cast off the serpentine body, divided (the wealth) among his sons, and obtained a divine body. All the sons, of a good behaviour, were delighted at the wealth which their father gave after dividing it and which amounted a crore. They, of pious minds, constructed wells, tanks, lakes, performed sacrifices to please the god, so also opened free boardings. Then, muttering the seventh chapter, they with their eyes fixed on final bliss, obtained release, knowing the eighth one (also) the most desired one.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYTWO

The Eighth Chapter: *Bhāvaśarman's Story*

Śiva said:

1-6. O Pārvatī, listen. I shall tell you the greatness of the eighth chapter, by merely listening to which you will get great joy. A city named Āmardaka is well-known in the southern

country. There was a brāhmaṇa named Bhāvaśarman, the husband of a courtesan. He, very fierce, ate flesh, drank liquor, stole the wealth of the good, dallied with others' wives, had a strong desire for hunting, carried out his strong desire. Drinking the nectar-like juice of tālī-fruit up to his throat (i.e. excessively), he was very much troubled by indigestion. The sinful one died (in due course) of time, and became a great tāla tree. A couple turned into brāhmaṇa-ghosts, lived there resorting to its shadow, dense and very cold.

The goddess said:

7. Tell me, O god, what was their caste? What was their nature? What was their profession? Due to what deed were they turned into brāhmaṇa-ghosts?

Śiva said:

8-17. There was a brāhmaṇa, Kuśīvala by name, who knew the essential nature of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, who was proficient in all holy texts, and whose conduct was good. His wife, named Kumati, was of a wicked mind. He along with his wife, was very greedy and accepted great gifts like a buffalo, a Kālapuruṣa(?), horses etc., day after day; (but) he did not give (even) a chowrie to brāhmaṇas. As time passed, the two evil spirits, of the form of brāhmaṇa-ghosts, with their bodies oppressed by hunger and thirst, roamed over this earth. They then rested after having come to the root of the palm tree. "How will this great agony of ours go away? When will there be freedom from this stock of brāhmaṇa-ghosts?" Thus asked by the brāhmaṇa female, the brāhmaṇa (male) spoke (to her): "How can we be free from this calamity without instruction in the knowledge of the supreme spirit, metaphysical consideration, and the knowledge of the manner in which a deed is done."

The wife said:

O best man, what is that Brahman; what is metaphysics? What is an act?*

Listen to the wonder that took place, when his wife spoke

*Cp. BG VIII. 1a: किं तद्ब्रह्म किमध्यात्मं किं कर्म पुरुषोत्तम ।

this much. That tree listening to half a verse from the eighth chapter gave up its form of the palm-tree and became an excellent brāhmaṇa. With his mind suddenly shaken by knowledge, he was free from the garb of sins. The couple became free due to that greatness (of the Gītā).

18-25. When these words luckily went out of his mouth, then from the atmosphere an aeroplane appeared, which had small bells tinkling, which was auspicious, which was adorned with faces resembling the orb of the moon, of celestial damsels, which was crowded with bees hovering round the lotuses in the form of the faces of the celestial nymphs, which was adorned with chowries white like the foam on the shore of the Milky Ocean being churned, and charming like the ripples of Gaṅgā, lovely with the singing gandharvas, and with hundreds of young divine damsels dancing. The couple got into the divine aeroplane and went to heaven. The entire occurrence of this place was amazing. Then the wise one wrote this half verse carefully. He went to the city named Vārāṇasī, giving salvation, seeking to propitiate Viṣṇu, god of gods. The generous-minded one started to practise a great penance there. In the meanwhile, (Lakṣmī) the daughter of the Milky Ocean, after joining her hands, asked Viṣṇu, the lord of the world, and the god of gods: "How is it that you are wakeful after having abandoned sleep? Tell me".

The lord said:

26-28. An intelligent brāhmaṇa named Bhāvaśarman, full of a flood of devotion, is seriously practising penance on the bank of Gaṅgā at Kāśī. With his senses controlled, he is muttering half the verse from the eighth chapter of the Gītā. O goddess, due to that penance I am very much pleased. Thinking for a long time desiring to give a fruit like (i.e. suitable to) his penance, I am now wakeful (like this).

Pārvatī said:

29. O lord, if Viṣṇu, though pleased, became thoughtful, what fruit did Bhāvaśarman, the devotee of Viṣṇu, get?

Śrī Mahādeva said:

30-32. Then that best brāhmaṇa, Bhāvaśarman, having received the grace of (Viṣṇu) the enemy of Mura, got endless happiness. Those born in his family who had formerly experienced torture, also obtained the (highest) position due to his acts. O you fawn-eyed one, I have told a little about the greatness of the eighth chapter. It should be always noted.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYTHREE

The Ninth Chapter: A Goat's Story

Śrī Mahādeva said:

1-8. Hereafter I shall carefully explain (this importance of) the ninth chapter. Being steady (i.e. attentive) listen to it, O daughter of the Himālaya Mountain. On the bank of Narmadā, there was a city named Māhiṣmatī. There lived an auspicious brāhmaṇa named Mādhava, who knew the true nature of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, who every time loved the guests. The pure-minded one, having earned much money by means of his learning only, some time commenced to perform a great sacrifice. He brought a goat, for killing him at the sacrifice after worshipping his body. He (the goat), laughing loudly, uttered (these) words: "What is the use of these many sacrifices, though performed in the proper manner, (but) having perishable fruits, and causing birth, old age and death? O brāhmaṇa, see my condition like this." Men staying in the pavilion, were amazed at hearing these words of the goat, that greatly excited curiosity. Then the brāhmaṇa, with his eyes motionless, saluting him devoutly and with the palms of his hands joined, respectfully asked the goat:

The brāhmaṇa said:

9. Which caste do you belong to? What is your nature? What is your mode of life? Tell (me that). Due to what act (of yours) you obtained the birth as a goat?

The goat said:

10-24. Formerly I was (born) in a very pure family of brāhmaṇas. I was proficient in the Vedic lore and offered hosts of sacrifices. Once my wife, modest with devotion to Caṇḍikā, asked for a goat from me for appeasing the disease of (our) son. Then when the goat was being killed in the pavilion of Caṇḍikā, the goat's mother, expounder of the Vedas, cursed me: "O mean brāhmaṇa, O you who are performing a sacrifice that is not approved by the holy texts, since you are killing my innocent son, you will get the stock of (i.e. will be born as) a goat." Then, O best brāhmaṇa, I, after dying after (some) time, was born as a goat, after having crossed (i.e. gone through) torment and torture of many kinds of existences. Even though I had gone to the stock of (i.e. was born as) a beast, I had (retained) the recollection of (former) births.

The brāhmaṇa said:

My mind is curious, is intent on hearing about your birth due to curiosity. Tell all (about) that to all these brāhmaṇas.

The goaṭ said:

Some time I was (born as) a monkey. Children saw me dancing in every courtyard due to instruction given to me by a juggler. Seeing the generous sons, and my wife also, I became averse to any act and gave up the going round in dancing. Then the juggler, with his eyes red due to anger, severely beat me with round sticks, difficult to bear. Then I bleeding continuously, fainted. Smelling at food and water, I died. Then I became a dog wandering in every house. I, eating food that was abandoned and that was left after eating, filled my belly on the way. Sometime I entered the kitchen of my own house. Being hungry, I started eating the boiled rice placed in a plate. I smelt the ground, looked into the ten directions slowly and through fear. Being afraid of the sound of people, I licked my side. Then my sons came and saw me at some time. And my old wife beat me with clubs etc. Then, I, with my waist broken and discharging much blood fled.

25-33. Overcome with swoon, I somehow went out of the house. In course of time my limbs were stinking with pus and

full of insects. Then I obtained the state of (i.e. was born as) a horse. O learned man, I became a horse in the house of a distiller and died in course of time. Some time he brought me, with my teeth falling due to old age, in a square crowded with people, for sale. My wife intent on going on a pilgrimage to Dvārakā, trying to buy me for a small price, bought me and tied me, the old one, with a rope, and mounting on me along with her two or three sons, started going. Slowly I got plunged into deep mud on the bank of a lake. There I, with my neck turned, and falling into the mud, was again and again being beaten by (my) sons having clubs and stones in their hands. Being repeatedly raised I died. Then having decided that I was dead, the sons who gave up their exertion, wailed, and having surrounded their helpless mother, they went home. Then having died there I went to the stock of (i.e. was born as) a goat. I passed through many stocks, low and high, giving torment and agony.

The brāhmaṇa said:

34. O great goat, what is the use of this collection of miseries everyday? (Tell me) properly and uprightly, by what I would have endless happiness.

The goat said:

35-48. I shall, O brāhmaṇa, tell another wonder comfortably to you who are asking me, if you have curiosity. There was a city named Kurukṣetra, giving salvation. There lived king Candraśarman of the solar dynasty. At the time of the solar eclipse he, endowed with great faith, started giving gift of Kālapuruṣa. Having called a brāhmaṇa, master of the Vedas and Vedāṅgas, he went with his priest to bathe with auspicious holy water. Then Kālapuruṣa, laughing, said: "O brāhmaṇa, at the time of the solar eclipse, at this holy place called Kurukṣetra, others do not accept anything. How do you desire to receive a gift? Knowing that all this certainly causes sin, how do you proceed to do it with a mind blinded by greed of wealth?" Having heard these words of him, causing wonder to the world the brāhmaṇa said: "What is the use of this fear of

great gift? I do know the means properly to cross the unfathomable ocean of the sin due to a great gift like this." Then the king, having bathed, having put on two garments, being pure, pleased in mind, having put on white flowers and having anointed his body, having held the hand of the priest, being served by persons proper for the occasion, came (there). The king, having come there, gave the brāhmaṇa, Kālapuruṣa, according to the proper rite. Having pierced the heart of the Kālapuruṣa, a sinful cāṇḍāla, with red eyes, of a cruel appearance went out. So also, at the joy due to interest in censuring others, a female cāṇḍālikā, viz. Censure, came to the side of the brāhmaṇa whose death was brought near.

49-60. This couple of the cāṇḍālas of ruddy eyes, going out, forcibly moved into the body of the brāhmaṇa. While the king was looking on, the brāhmaṇa stood muttering the ninth chapter of the Gītā in his mind, trembling a little and remaining silent like the ocean with Viṣṇu sleeping inside trembling due to the movements of the wind. Then the cāṇḍāla-couple that was near the brāhmaṇa, was troubled by Viṣṇu's (attendants) appearing due to (the recitation of) the letters of the Gītā, and with its efforts rendered futile, and (deciding to) flee, went away. The king who actually noticed the happening like this, with his eyes smiling (i.e. dilated) due to wonder, asked the brāhmaṇa: "How—by muttering what hymn, or remembering what god—did you go over this calamity? Who was that man? Who was that woman? How did they approach (you)? How were they appeased? O brāhmaṇa tell it to me."

The brāhmaṇa said:

I know the couple: Strong sin had assumed the form of the (male) cāṇḍāla. Censure took the form of the female cāṇḍāla. I remembered the series of the verses of the ninth chapter of the Gītā. O king, know that all this is its virtue. O king, everyday I mutter the ninth chapter of the Gītā. Due to that the calamities caused by my accepting bad gifts were overcome by me. The king learnt the ninth chapter from the brāhmaṇa. Both obtained highest joy.

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED EIGHTYFOUR

The Tenth Chapter: A Swan's Story

The goddess said:

1-5a. O you omniscient one, the life of all, the lord of all, the master of speech, O Śiva, I am lucky since you, respectable and visible, have explained this auspicious grandeur of the ninth chapter, the honey, full of many wonderful and sweet accounts. O lord of gods, I, hearing it, was not content. O Śiva, my desire to hear it is not dulled. (On the contrary) it increases. My life is listening to the Gītā, O you ocean of greatness. Even in that (Gītā) the sages declare the tenth chapter to be the principal. Tell me an account relating to that great chapter.

Śiva said:

5b-17. O beautiful one, listen to this ladder to the inaccessible heaven difficult to get. It is, as it were, the limit of grandeurs, highly purifying account. In the city of Kāśī, there was a brāhmaṇa devoted to pious fame. His mind was tranquil, free from mischief, cruelty and violence. With his senses controlled, he was always engaged in bliss. He was known as Dhīradhī, and was devoted to me like Nandin. He had crossed the ocean of the Vedas, and was proficient in the meaning of all holy texts. Once while he, subservient (i.e. given) to meditation, with his mind plunged in (the thought of) the internal soul, having the eyes of (i.e. perceiving) the Supreme Spirit, was going, I, through affection, ran, and gave support to his hand, causing wonder. The absent-minded one, having sipped water, having fixed his eyes full of great joy on the tip of his nose, remained, with his senses as it were sleepy. When he, of long (broad) eyes, slept for a while, without fear, at night, using as a pillow the large threshold of the door, O broad-eyed one, Bhṛṅgiriṭi, saluting my lotus-like feet, asked me: "Due to which rite has he secured your sight? What (kind of) penance has this noble one practised, what oblations has he made, what (hymns) has he muttered, that the god supports his hand at every step? Why is he not able to go out of this city? If, by chance, he crosses the boundary of Kāśī, he does not see even these people that are by his

side. I wish to know the cause of this—(I wish to hear) the words of my master. If I deserve to be favoured then tell me what is proper." Hearing this question of Bhṛṅgiriṭi, I said:

18-26. Once I was in the Punnāga forest which was near Kailāsa, the forest which was full of the hosts of the beautiful divine women making sounds, in which the quarters were joyful with the multitudes of the cooings of the cuckoos, which was full of the notes of (birds) like the eagle and the cātaka, which was bristling with the drops shining on the rotating, wooden machine for raising water, which was full of the bulbs of the plantain trees (growing) on the sides of the drains, which was full of musk-deer, which was stupefied with the sounds of kinnaras, which was at places resorted to by deer with the outer corners of their eyes dull due to rumination, which was full of parrots, where the swans showed their cleverness among them, which was stirred by the thick wind, with joyful sounds, in which the bees were intoxicated by the rum exuding from the Mādhavī flowers, which was full of the fragrance of the clusters of blooming trivalī flowers, in which the bees were slow due to the intoxication caused by the fragrance of blooming bakula flowers, in which the region of the earth was washed with the nectar oozing from the moon. Having sat on a seat I remained there for a while. The wind, by way of the churning sticks in the form of terrific branches breaking due to friction, blew under the pretext of a trembling mountain. Then there was a great sound which resounded at the sides of the valley.

27-38. Then from the cave of the sky a bird descended. He was like the autumnal cloud, and was as it were the mass of collyrium. He was as it were the mass of darkness, or a mountain with its wings cut off. Having rested on the earth, the bird saluted me. Having brought a fresh flower, he put it at my feet. Then the bird uttered (my) praise with distinct words: "Victory to you, O god, O Brahman, O joy, O ocean of nectar, O lord of the world, O billow of the continuous contact with good feelings, O you having infinite bodies, O you who are free from the three kinds of dirt due to your thought full of the feeling of uniqueness, O you who have conquered your senses, O you who are dependent, O you, whose body can be secured (only) by means of concentration, O you free from adjuncts,

O you who are free, O formless one, O pure one, O limitless one, O you free from egotism, O you having no obstruction, O you qualityless one, O you protector of those who have submitted themselves to you, O you with skilful lotus-like feet, O you of a terrible garland, O you great tiger, O you who burnt Cupid with flames, O you who pierced the lord of demons with an axe, O you great lord, O you who wiped the sindūra on the forehead of the wife of Tripura, O you who applied excellent saffron to the lotus-like breasts of Kātyāyanī, salutation to (you), who are away from proofs, to (you) of the form of great intellect, to (you) the lord of life, to (you) of the form of the three worlds. I salute your lotus-like feet which are touched by the excellent meditating saints and which are wonderful in going to the other end of the unlimited ocean of the worldly existence. Even the lord of speech (i.e. Bṛhaspati) is not able to praise you. Even (Śeṣa), the lord of serpents, does not have the skill in describing you, O great god; then what to say of me, a bird, with a small intelligence?"

39-54a. Having heard this praise made by the bird, I said to him: "O bird, who are you, wherefrom do you come? Your body is like that of a swan, and your colour is like that of a crow. Tell me for what purpose you have come here." The bird, the best among speakers, thus asked by me, with his neck slightly bent in respect spoke with a soft voice: "O lord of gods, O Dhūrjaṭī, know me to be Brahmā's swan. (Know) due to which this blackness has recently come up, O lord. O you omniscient one, listen to what is said (in reply to) what is asked by you. When I came to the earth from the Mānasa lake, I landed into a danger. Near the Saurāṣṭra city, I, having taken mouthfuls of lotus-stalks, white like the young crescent moon, from a lake where the lotuses were blooming, resorted to my strength and quickly went into the sky. Then from the sky I suddenly fell on the ground. Then with my mind covered with swoon, with my senses fully weakened, with my body trembling, I, being touched by cool breezes, regained consciousness. I did not ascertain the cause of my fall. 'Oh, what has this come? How had I a fall today due to which I have this blackness on my body, white like perfect camphor?' Thus when I, full of wonder, thought (to myself), I heard, from the lotus, words like these: 'O swan, get

up; I shall tell you the cause of your fall and blackness.' Then I got up and came to the middle of the lake. I saw a charming lotus-plant, having five lotuses. I commenced asking (it) the cause of (my) blackness and fall. Then I saw, in the sky, six myriad men who were dark like clouds, who had covered themselves with gold-coloured garments, who had four arms (each), the weapons (of each) of whom were a mace, a conch, a disc and a lotus, who were variegated with crowns, necklaces, armlets and ear-rings. Having saluted and gone round, keeping it to my right, the lotus-plant, I asked her everything beginning with my fall".

The lotus plant said:

54b-63a. O swan, you moved in the sky passing over me. Due to that sin you have fallen on the ground. O best bird, due to that only blackness is seen on your body. Sixty thousand bees, smelling the fragrance, produced by the middle lotus that was talking on seeing you falling with its mind full of compassion, went to heaven. Those whom you saw having a lustre like that of a blue lotus, were the sons of a sage in the seventh existence that has passed. On the bank of this very lake, they practised a very severe penance. Sometime, a beautiful lady, having breasts like clusters of campaka-flowers, with the outer corners of her eyes unsteady and charming due to wavy hair, with the brightness of her smile being kissed by the moonlight released from the pearl of her nose, having put the lute between her breasts, sang in the forest. Hearing the sound of her who was singing, the brāhmaṇas, like deer, went to her, and saw her simultaneously. They said to one another: "I saw her (first), she is mine." Then a pugilistic encounter took place among the brothers. With their chests pounded with one anothers' fists, they died.

63b-82. Having enjoyed various fearful hells, they became cranes on the earth. Then they killed wild beasts and were burnt by wild fire. Then being born as cāṇḍālas they killed travellers on the way. Having drunk poisonous water in the forest, they went to Yama's abode. One by one they got the stock of an ass, a camel, a monkey, and a cat. Then they be-

came bees, and are (now) in the lake. Today having smelt my fragrance they have gone to the position of Viṣṇu. O best bird, listen, I shall tell you (that) by which there is grandeur in me. In the third birth that has passed (from this birth), I was a daughter of a brāhmaṇa named Sarojavadana. I was devoted only to fidelity, and was engaged in serving the elders. Once, while I was teaching a sārikā, there was a delay. My husband, who got angry, cursed me: "O sinful one, be a sārikā." After death I got sārikāhood (i.e. was born as a sārikā), (but) due to the propitiousness of my fidelity, a girl in the sages' house nourished me. It is well-known that the tenth chapter (of the Gītā) is power(-ful). The brāhmaṇa recited it in the morning; I listened to it removing sin. O bird, after (some) time, I cast the body of the sārikā, and became, due to the greatness of the tenth chapter, a celestial nymph in heaven. I was known as Padmavatī; and was the dear friend of Lakṣmī. Once when I was going in an aeroplane through the sky, I saw this charming lake containing spotless lotuses. After descending, when I started sporting in its water, Durvāsas came (there) and saw me without clothes. Then I myself took up this form of a lotus plant. I have five lotuses, two lotuses with my two feet (turned into them), two lotuses with my hands (turned into them) and the fifth lotus with my face (turned into that). The lord of sages looked at me with eyes blazing with anger. "O sinful one, with this form only stay for a hundred years." Giving a curse like this, he vanished in a moment. Due to the greatness of the tenth chapter my (power of) speech has not vanished. By just going over me, you fell on the ground. O best bird, today, when you remain (by me) my curse will cease. Listen to the best chapter recited by me; by just hearning which you will be free from the curse today only.

Saying like this, she recited the tenth chapter in a soft voice. Having heard it, and having taken the lotus given by her, I offered it, the best lotus of the lotus plant, to you.

Speaking like this, he cast his body. It was wonderful.

Bhṛṅgiriṭi said:

83-99. Who was he in his former birth? How did he be-

come Brahmā's swan? With what intention did he cast his body in front of you?

Hearing these words of Bhṛṅgiriṭi, I said to him: "He was born in the former birth in a brāhmaṇa's house. He was well known as Sutapas, was a celibate and had his senses controlled. Living in his preceptor's house, he studied the Vedas everyday. He devoutly and properly served his preceptor. (Once) he while asleep touched, with his foot, his preceptor who was asleep. Due to that sin he obtained the state of a lower animal even in heaven. Then the brāhmaṇa was born among the swans of the Lotus-born (Brahmā). In this existence, when I was watching, the tenth chapter of the Gītā was narrated before him. Having heard it, the bird obtained excellent knowledge. Due to the grandeur of the tenth chapter he was born in a brāhmaṇa family. Due to practice from birth, from the lotus-like face of him even when a child the tenth chapter of the Gītā always flashes. As a result of its meaning he always sees the god holding a conch, a disc, living in all beings. He on whomsoever and whenever, he casts his affectionate glance, is released even though he is a drunkard or killer of a brāhmaṇa. Knowing that I, of the form of the Supreme Soul, brought the brāhmaṇa to this city which is naturally a holy place giving salvation. Salvation is (just) on the palm of people living here. Therefore, due to his seeing (them) no other special effect is produced. I do not allow his knowledge very difficult to get, which he formerly obtained due to the greatness of the tenth chapter, to go out of him. So also this sage obtained salvation while living. Therefore, I give him my hand when he moves and walks along the road. O Bhṛṅgiriṭi, such is the great importance of the tenth chapter.

Thus I have told the same account destroying sins as was told before (i.e. to) Bhṛṅgiriṭi. A man or a woman, whosoever (he or she may be) would obtain the fruit of all the stages of human life by merely listening to it.